





# CRITICAL ESSAYS.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following Essays have in substance been already published in the form of newspaper articles. They have been collected and thrown into their present shape in consequence of requests and suggestions from various quarters. They are, however, by no means mere reprints; but have been since their first appearance revised, greatly enlarged, and in parts re-written.

May 24, 1864.



## CONTENTS.

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|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. Wesleyan Methodism . . . . .                       | 1    |
| II. Essays and Reviews . . . . .                      | 30   |
| III. Life of Edward Irving . . . . .                  | 63   |
| IV. Dr. Hessey's Bampton Lectures on Sunday . . . . . | 94   |
| V. Life of Bishop Wilson, of Sodor and Man . . . . .  | 113  |
| VI. Life of Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta . . . . .      | 140  |
| VII. Life of Calvin . . . . .                         | 166  |



# CRITICAL ESSAYS.

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## ESSAY I.

*The Life of Wesley.* By ROBERT SOUTHEY, Esq., LL.D. A New Edition. Two Vols., 8vo.

*History of Wesleyan Methodism.* By GEORGE SMITH, F.A.S., &c. Vol. I. Wesley and his Times. Vol. II. The Middle Age. Vol. III. Modern Methodism.

*The Life of Jabez Bunting, D.D.* By his Son, T. P. BUNTING. Vol. I.

IT would be superfluous, almost impertinent, to praise a standard work like Southey's *Life of Wesley*. The last edition of it is a cheap and convenient reprint of the best of the earlier ones, that, namely, of 1846, which was edited by the author's son, and contained the marginal notes of S. T. Coleridge; and in the Appendix a lengthy, interesting, and very learned paper on Wesley and Wesleyanism, by the late Alexander Knox. Such an original, with two such annotators, furnishes a triple cord which must enchain all who have the ability to appreciate, and the taste to relish, first-rate biography, and luminous criticism upon it. Southey was the first who gave any thing approaching to a



candid and able account of the founder of Methodism. Previous biographers—and they were several—had been more intent upon promoting the ends of religious faction than on giving an impartial picture of their hero ; and were all of them conspicuously wanting either in the impartiality or the ability to estimate justly his character and his work. And Southey's biography still stands alone. The forty years which have elapsed since its first publication have produced nothing to abate from the repute it at once attained as one of the best works of its very interesting class ; nothing materially to shake the conclusions its author formed about the character he handles in it ; and nothing certainly in the shape of a Life of Wesley which could supersede, or even pretend to compare with it. It is unnecessary to rehearse an oft-told tale, and we shall not dwell on the incidents of Wesley's extraordinary career. His character has been not less anxiously canvassed and hotly debated since his death than it was in his life—and no two of the authorities now before us are of the same mind respecting it. Some traits of it, indeed, are so marked, as to suggest themselves irresistibly to all tolerably candid and competent observers. It is scarce possible not to note his eager and impatient temperament, which made hesitation and suspense either in action or opinion intolerable to him ; his credulity, seen in the unwarrantable value he attached to sudden revolutions of the mind, and in the encouragement he lent during a great part of his course to some of the more questionable excesses to which his followers gave way ; his logical power, strangely and



heterogeneously made up of sagacity and rashness, jumping at consequences careless of the soundness of the footing whence the leap was made; his remarkable practical wisdom, which consisted, however, rather in a fertility of clever expedients for immediate exigencies than in that prophetic foresight which anticipates and forestalls future issues and distant results. Another of Wesley's deeply-marked characteristics, which his admiring disciples in vain try to obliterate, is his extraordinary egotism. Had he not possessed vanity enough to believe any thing and every thing respecting himself to be well worthy of recording, he would hardly have found the time and the patience to keep, as he did, a minute diary for some sixty-five years, not only of his actions and his journeys, but of his thoughts, opinions, and observations on men, books, and endless miscellaneous topics; much less would he have bequeathed such a record to his disciples—a record which, had it been possible for a humble or delicate-minded man to keep it at all, would, of all things, have been kept for himself alone. In all Wesley's works, whatever be their subject, he either finds or makes opportunity to speak of himself, his own views, his own conduct. He evidently seems to himself to stand at the centre of all things, and regards them as going their appointed ways from him and to him. Southey truly remarks of him, when in the full swing of his career, "The world did not contain a happier man than Wesley, nor in his own eyes a more important one."

Coleridge's comment is severe—we are persuaded, far too severe—but still on the true line:—"Rooted am-



bition, restless appetite of power and primacy, with a vindictive spirit, breaking out into slanders against those who interfered with his ruling passion, and a logical shadow-fight with notions and words, sustained by the fervour of the game, with an entire absence and unsusceptibility of ideas and tranquil depths of being—in short, my-my-my-self in a series of disguises and self-delusions. Such is the sum of Southey's statement; and are these compatible with the same Wesley at the same time assuredly loving God with *all* his heart, and with *all* his soul, and with *all* his strength? If it were right and possible for a man to lose himself in God—yet can he lose God in himself, otherwise than by making his self his God?"—Southey, vol. i. p. 243, note.

Such a mind is always an active and a versatile one; and few have equalled, none perhaps excelled, Wesley's industry and many-sidedness. For fifty years he rose at four in the morning. He read while he made his journeys on horseback—a dangerous practice, which cost him one or two serious accidents; and in the latter part of his life, when increasing infirmities obliged him to use a carriage, he read still more. Hence, during the seasons snatched by economical management of time out of the busiest of lives, he not only kept up the high acquirements in academical lore which he had made his own at Oxford, but mastered most of the modern languages, was well read in almost every science and every study to which he could get access, and kept thoroughly up with the lighter literature of the day—poetry, pamphlets, and works of fiction. The list of his revised editions of other men's books, of his epitomes, manuals,



histories, commentaries, &c.—literally seeming to be almost *de omni scibili*—consists of no less than 118 distinct works, some of them of considerable bulk. When we add to these, several collections of psalm-tunes, of hymns, and of prayers which he published, and the sixteen volumes forming the ordinary edition of his works, we have a monument of ability and energy worthy of the most operose and prolific writers of ancient times. How far superior he was to the very best of his followers in breadth and liberality of mind is curiously illustrated by the following extract from Mr. Smith's second volume :—

Mr. Pawson was a very good man, and a useful preacher; but beyond the study of divinity his literary taste was of a very humble character. When Dr. Whitehead had finished his *Life of Wesley*, he returned the papers and manuscripts which he had so long retained in his possession, to the book steward, Mr. George Storey, by whom they were deposited in the superintendent's house, in the custody of Mr. Pawson. This preacher, no doubt with the best intentions, took upon himself to examine these papers, and to destroy what he thought useless. By this rash procedure, it is feared, many documents of great interest were irrecoverably lost. Indeed, this Gothic spirit did not find sufficient gratification in the burning of manuscripts. There was in Wesley's library in that house a fine quarto edition of Shakspeare, presented to him by a gentleman of Dublin. The margin of this book was filled with critical notes by Wesley's own hand. Yet Mr. Pawson, regarding this book as among the things which tended not to edification, destroyed it. Fortunately Mr. Moore at Bristol heard of the progressive destruction of the papers, and instantly wrote, protesting against such conduct, and demanding them as Wesley's trustee,—a course which saved the remainder.—Smith, vol. ii. pp. 296, 297.

Mr. Knox lived for many years in close and familiar intercourse with Wesley, and at one time was a member of the Wesleyan Society, which, however, he soon



quitted. As might be supposed, his view of Wesley's character and motives is far more favourable than that of Coleridge, or even Southey. Much must be allowed for the partiality of an old friend; and there are parts of Wesley's conduct which seem quite irreconcilable with the single-mindedness which Mr. Knox ascribes to him. His conduct to the Moravians, which Mr. Smith judiciously passes but lightly over, was an instance. We do not speak of his turning so sharply and suddenly on those with whom he had been in close spiritual sympathy. This, which he did in turn to almost every one with whom he held fellowship, arose from the character of his mind. We find in him no gradual transitions. He was driven from point to point by forces partly logical, partly circumstantial; and he often seemed to be warmest in defending his position when just on the point of abandoning it. In each of his changes he was, as it were, thrust from one stand-point to another with headlong violence; and almost before he had regained his feet, he assailed with eager, sometimes bitter, reproaches those whose company he had just left. His letters to the author of the *Serious Call* are a singular instance of this. But no strength of idiosyncrasy can excuse or even palliate his behaviour to the Moravians. He had been received as a friend and a brother at their settlement of Herrnhut; he had professed himself much edified by the purity and piety of their lives, and their zeal in Missionary labour; he borrowed directly from them not a little of his peculiar theology, and of the plan on which he organized his society. Yet, not content with suddenly and utterly separating



from them in 1738, he charged them, Southey tells us, "with being cruel and deceitful men. He published in his *Journal* accusations against them of the foulest kind, made by persons who had forsaken their society ; thus giving the whole weight of his judgment to these abominable charges." This, in Southey's opinion, must be considered the most "disingenuous act" in Wesley's life. Coleridge, not without justice, remarks : "Without supposing a certain partiality to have stolen, unperceived, on Southey's mind, I cannot explain this palliative phrase, 'disingenuous,' for a series of deliberate, revengeful, almost fiendish, calumnies, perpetrated against the light of Wesley's own recollections."—Southey, vol. i. p. 223, note.

A point of special interest to Churchmen, and on which their judgment of Wesley must greatly depend, is what his intentions were with respect to the relations between the Church and his own society. Southey's remarks on the so-called consecration of Dr. Coke by Wesley to be a Bishop in America are well worth reading and re-reading :—

Mr. Wesley had been convinced, by the perusal of Lord King's account of the Primitive Church, that bishops and presbyters are the same order. Men are sometimes easily convinced of what they find it convenient or agreeable to believe. Regarding the apostolic succession as a fable, he thought, when this application from America arrived, that the best thing which he could do would be to secure the Wesleyan succession for the United States. Having, therefore, determined how to act, he communicated his determination to Dr. Coke, and proposed, in his character of presbyter, which he said was the same as bishop, to invest him with the same presbytero-episcopal powers, that, in that character, he might proceed to America, and superintend the societies in the United States.



The doubts which Dr. Coke entertained as to the validity of Mr. Wesley's authority were removed by the same treatise which had convinced Mr. Wesley; and it seems not to have occurred to either the one or the other, that if presbyter and bishop were the same order, the proposed consecration was useless; for Dr. Coke, having been regularly ordained, was as good a bishop as Mr. Wesley himself. . . . Wesley had long deceived himself respecting the part which he was acting toward the Church of England. At the outset of his career he had no intention of setting himself up in opposition to it; and when, in his progress toward schism, he disregarded its forms, and set its discipline at nought, he still repeatedly disclaimed all views of separation. Nor did he ever avow the wish, or refer to it as a likely event, with complacency, even when he must have perceived that the course of his conduct and the temper of his followers rendered it inevitable. On this occasion his actions spoke for him: by arrogating the episcopal authority, he took the only step which was wanting to form the Methodists into a distinct body of separatists from the Church. Nevertheless, this was not done without reluctance, arising from old and rooted feelings; nor without some degree of shame, perhaps, for the inconsistencies in which he had involved himself. From the part which he now took, and the manner in which he attempted to justify it, it may be presumed that the story of his applying to the Greek bishop for consecration is well founded, notwithstanding the falsehoods which his enemies had added to the simple fact. Mr. Wesley's declared opinion respecting the identity of the episcopal and priestly orders was contradicted by his own conduct; and it may be suspected that his opinion upon the apostolical succession rested on no better ground than its convenience to his immediate purpose. Undoubtedly, as he says, it is not possible to prove the apostolical succession; but short of that absolute proof which, in this case, cannot be obtained, and therefore ought not to be demanded, there is every reason for believing it. No person who fairly considers the question can doubt this, whatever value he may attach to it. But Wesley knew its value. He was neither so deficient in feeling or in sagacity as not to know that the sentiment which connects us with other ages, and by which we are carried back, is scarcely less useful in its influences than the hopes by which we are carried forward. He would rather have been a link of the golden chain, than the ring from whence a



new one of inferior metal was to proceed. Soon after he had taken the memorable step of consecrating Dr. Coke as an American bishop, he arrogated to himself the same authority for Scotland as for America; and this, he maintained, was not a separation from the Church—"Not from the Church of Scotland," said he, "for we were never connected therewith; not from the Church of England, for this is not concerned in the steps which are taken in Scotland. Whatever, then, is done, either in America or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this: I have many objections against it." He had been led toward a separation imperceptibly, step by step; but it is not to his honour that he affected to deprecate it to the last, while he was evidently bringing it about by the measures which he pursued.—Southey, vol. ii. pp. 212—215.

Mr. Knox's apology for Wesley's conduct is, that he yielded to the urgency of those about him, and was betrayed by his partialities for individuals into grievous inconsistency. It certainly was one of his characteristics to conceive strong and not always discriminating attachments. His brother Charles once tells him—"Nay, it signifies nothing to tell you any thing, for whomever you once love, you will love on through thick and thin." During the last years of Wesley's life several circumstances concurred to alienate the Wesleyan body from the Church. The growing influence of the lay preachers, their jealousy of the few clergy who acted with them, their natural desire of placing themselves on a level with the ministers of other denominations, the disrespect with which the Church began to be regarded by those who preferred the preaching of the conventicle,—all inevitably tended to the result which was not finally consummated till after Wesley's death. That those in whom these tendencies were most



marked used strong solicitations to induce Wesley to commit those schismatical acts on which so much stress is laid cannot be doubted. The only question is, whether Wesley's own inclination seconded that of his advisers or not—whether his fault was only that he allowed himself to be misled by importunity, acting on the assailable points of a mind debilitated by extremely advanced old age, or whether he was guilty of the grievous sin of sacrificing his principles to an ambitious desire of consolidating his community, and perpetuating his name. Mr. Knox pleads earnestly for the less unfavourable view of his conduct. The point is so important and so interesting that we may be pardoned for making an extract of some length from his remarks:—

So much did he deprecate a gratuitous separation, that when, some years before his death, I asked him, in a private conversation, how he should wish his friends to act in case of the Methodists withdrawing from the Established Church, his answer was, “I would have them adhere to the Church and leave the Methodists.” It is on the proofs which Mr. Wesley gave to the last of this same feeling every now and then recovering its ascendancy, even after he had yielded to contrarious counsels, that I ground my exculpation of him from intentional duplicity. I submit the particular instances to Mr. Southey's consideration; he will judge whether they do not give evidence of a mind at distressing variance with itself, and as incapable of forming any politic design for its own purpose, as of detecting the representations of interested prejudiced advisers. The first remarkable instance of the kind to which I allude occurred more than two years after his first ordination for America. A spirit of decided Dissent broke out at Deptford, and Mr. Wesley was urged to allow the Methodists there to hold their Sunday service at Church hours. But he refused compliance on the ground (*Journal*, 1st Edit. Sept. 24, 1786) that “this would be a formal separation from the Church.” “To fix” (our service), he adds, “at the same hour is obliging them to separate either from the Church or us; and



this I judge to be not only inexpedient, but totally unlawful for me to do." This remonstrance, however, had but a transient effect, for on the 2nd of January following his words are—"I went over to Deptford, but it seemed I was got into a den of lions: most of the leading men in the society were mad for separating from the Church. I endeavoured to reason with them, but in vain; they had neither sense nor even good manners left. At length, after meeting the whole society, I told them, 'If you are resolved, you may have your service in the Church hours; but, remember, from that time you will see my face no more.' This struck deep, and from that hour I have heard no more of separation from the Church."

How Mr. Wesley could overlook the encouragement which he himself had given to such movements of Dissent, I acknowledge I do not comprehend. But these expressions not only bear an indubitable stamp of feeling, but it is impossible to conceive why, in that instance, he should have spoken otherwise than he felt, and still more, that he should have made such a record without a conscious sense of sincerity. Common policy would have especially forbidden its publication had he been in a state of mind duly to weigh either his own recent measures, or the consequences morally certain to ensue from them. When those, however, whom we may suppose to have advised those measures came themselves into power, they did their utmost to suppress this unquestionable evidence of Mr. Wesley's variance with himself, or rather of what were still the unbiassed workings of his heart. In every edition of Mr. Wesley's Journal, subsequent to his death, the former passage (Sept. 24th, 1786) is mutilated, and the latter passage (Jan. 2nd, 1787) wholly cancelled. They doubtless hoped to consign this virtual protest against their meditated plan to everlasting oblivion. But I happened to procure the original edition, and thereby had it in my power to quote both passages in a small pamphlet which I published in England in the year 1794, against the then commencing separation; and from that pamphlet I have now transcribed them. Their suppression is remarkable, not only for the wily policy of the act itself, but also as it serves to illustrate the kind of influence under which Mr. Wesley was placed during the last years of his life. Some other evidences of his radically unchanged principles (however he might have been seduced to depart from them in those strange instances of practice) could not be similarly put out of view,



though no endeavour of this kind was wanting. Thus, when Mr. Wesley was in Ireland, in the year 1789, at a distance from prejudiced advisers, and amongst persons cordially attached to the Church of England, he composed a sermon on Hebrews v. 4, which he published twelve months after in the *Arminian Magazine*, containing as energetic a testimony as could be expressed in language against separation from the Church, and assumption by his preachers of the priestly office. That even in this sermon there are gross inconsistencies and self-impositions I must allow; but where he urges what he considered the main point, the expressions are self-evidently the language of his heart. Fully aware that there was an ambition amongst his preachers to assume the ministerial office, he tells them—"Ye never dreamed of this for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, seek the priesthood also. Ye knew no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." He then proceeds—"O! contain yourselves within your own bounds. Be content with preaching the Gospel. I earnestly advise you, abide in your place; keep your own station. Ye were fifty years ago, those of you who were then Methodist preachers, extraordinary messengers of God, not going in your own will, but thrust out, not to supersede, but to provoke to jealousy the ordinary messengers. In God's name stop there. Ye yourselves were at first called in the Church of England, and though ye have, and will have, a thousand temptations to leave it, and set up for yourselves, regard them not. Be Church of England men still. Do not cast away the peculiar glory which God hath put upon you, and frustrate the design of Providence, the very end for which God raised you up." How very unpalatable this language was to those whose counsels had already made the evil too strong for repression, appears from their omission of this sermon in the volume of Mr. Wesley's yet uncollected discourses published after his death. He had himself collected into four volumes the sermons he had written for the *Arminian Magazine*, but as he persevered in this labour until within the last three months of his life, enough remained at the time of his death to form an additional volume. But the sermon from which I have transcribed the above passage was suppressed, and has never since appeared in any edition of Mr. Wesley's sermons.—Southey, vol. ii. pp. 314—317.



Southey himself was convinced by these arguments. In a letter, of which not only a copy but a *fac-simile* is given by Mr. Smith, in his second volume, bearing date August 17, 1835, Southey writes—"Mr. Alexander Knox has convinced me that I was mistaken in supposing ambition entered largely into Mr. Wesley's actuating impulses. Upon the subject he wrote a long and most admirable paper, and gave me permission to affix it to my own work, whenever it might be reprinted. This I shall do, and make such alterations in the book as are required in consequence." Although Mr. Knox's paper does, as we have seen, form an appendage to the later editions of Southey's work, yet the change of opinion here confessed is not adverted to in the work itself; and its editor is accordingly sharply censured by Mr. Smith for want of candour. Mr. Smith, however, should recollect that Southey, if persuaded at last of Wesley's integrity and disinterestedness in the main, must at the same time have attributed to him what, in Mr. Smith's judgment, would hardly be less offensive—viz. the weakest inconsistency, not to say imbecility, in respect of those acts on which the modern Wesleyans mainly rely for the justification of their own proceedings after Wesley's death. We much fear, however, that Mr. Smith's own volumes must be held to supply painfully convincing evidence, which probably had escaped both Southey and Knox, that Southey's original judgment was not far from the truth:—

"Mr. Wesley had hitherto ordained ministers only for America and Scotland; but from this period, being assisted by the Rev. James Creighton and the Rev. Peard Dickenson, presbyters of the



Church of England, he set apart for the sacred office, by the imposition of hands and prayer, Messrs. A. Mather, T. Rankin, and H. Moore, without sending them out of England; strongly advising them at the same time that, according to his example, they should continue united to the Established Church, so far as the blessed work in which they were engaged would permit." Thus Wesley did distinctly make known his opinion of the paramount importance of maintaining the progress of the work of God, even at the expense of his own devoted attachment to the Establishment. He at other times, and by various acts, showed that he regarded even the most useful form, and the most approved ecclesiastical order, as of small importance, when the work of grace in the salvation of men rendered a modification of them necessary. Not only, therefore, was "baptism, as well as the burial of the dead, performed by many of the preachers long before the death of Mr. Wesley, and with his consent," but Mr. John Martin, in reply to persons who had asserted that "the sacrament had never been given in England by laymen in Mr. Wesley's lifetime," says, "Mr. Wesley sent me to the city of Norwich, to a congregation who desired the sacrament; and I both baptized their children and administered the sacrament to the people part of three years; and the preachers who followed me did the same." The following gives a still more decisive account of departure from usual ecclesiastical order under the sanction of Wesley. "Before his" (Wesley's) "death, a great number of places had service in Church hours, and several of them the sacrament of the Lord's Supper regularly administered to them. He ordained Mr. Woodhouse, of Owston, near Epworth, and appointed him to preach in his gown and bands, in Church hours, and also to administer the sacrament, although he was only a local preacher." He also permitted "Mr. Hanby to administer the ordinances in the circuits where he laboured," although he had not been ordained.—Vol. ii. pp. 10, 11.

Our readers can now form their own judgment. Certain it is that Wesley acted either with the most extraordinary prevarication and duplicity, or was misled through most culpable weakness. Certain also it is that if his followers claim his acquittal from the former



charge, they must allow that their whole system, in so far as it involves separation from the Church, and organization into an independent and complete ecclesiastical community, is built not upon the uniform principles and mature convictions of their founder, but upon the weak concessions he made in his feeble years to their own importunities. In no case, whether modern Wesleyanism is built upon the treachery or the inconsistency of its author, can the dishonest suppression of his latest sentiments on these points, as attested by Mr. Knox, be excused. The mode in which this was done irresistibly suggests a suspicion, and something more than a suspicion, that the Conference was not so satisfied as it professed to be that its schismatical acts could be reconciled with the precepts of him to whom they pretend so ostentatiously to look as their "venerable father."

Mr. George Smith, the author of the three bulky volumes entitled a *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, would seem to be a person of some consideration amongst his co-religionists. We observe that he is entitled to several "handles" to his name, and has made other large contributions to Wesleyan literature, which are extolled in somewhat high-flown strains by the organs of Conference. We cannot congratulate the connexion upon showing a high average of literary ability, if Mr. Smith is one of their best specimens. He would seem to be sufficiently painstaking, and, for a thorough-going partisan of Conference, as candid as he can conveniently be; but we have seldom perused volumes of more unmitigated dulness than his. Tame



and prosy to an extreme, his facts of all sorts and sizes are exhibited on the same dead level, and in the same uninviting tints, badly relieved by unsuccessful attempts at unction. His present work is, judging from a list appended to the volumes, his most important, as it seems the least uninteresting of his efforts. It has evidently been written under the countenance of the Wesleyan leaders, and with some assistance from them; and may fairly be considered the Methodists' account and history of themselves. In this point of view the second volume, embracing the middle age of Wesleyanism, is particularly interesting. It contains the narrative of those troubles which immediately and inevitably followed the death of Wesley in March 1791, the issue of which was the severance of the connexion from the Church.

Mr. Smith describes Methodism after Wesley's death as containing "hundreds of congregations, comprising great numbers of men and women, well instructed in every Christian doctrine and duty, who walked daily in the experience of the Divine favour, and in the practice of all Christian virtue. Yet although these societies were clearly entitled to rank as Christian Churches, and were actually in possession of every other essential of Christian communion, they were not permitted to receive from the hands of their own preachers those sacred ordinances which form the most striking and distinctive privilege of the Church of Christ."—Vol. ii. pp. 2, 3. The connexion was in fact divided into two parties—those who advocated "the old plan," and those who were for organizing themselves into a complete ecclesiastical



community, supplying all the means of grace within itself. The conduct of Conference was politic, and was finally crowned with that result which beyond doubt had been all along sought and desired—viz. the severance of their body from the Church. At first they cast lots about the knotty point, perhaps having in mind the superstitious practice of Biblical sortilege which Wesley frequently resorted to in his difficulties. The lot decided that they should not administer “the sacrament” for the ensuing year—viz. 1793. The letter in which this result is communicated to the Members of the Societies by the President and Secretary of the Conference is so characteristic that we must transcribe it from Mr. Smith’s pages, vol. ii. p. 686:—

“Very dear Brethren,—The Conference desire us to write to you in their name in the most tender and affectionate manner, and to inform you of the event of their deliberations concerning the administration of the Lord’s Supper. After debating the subject time after time, we were greatly divided in sentiment. In short, we knew not what to do that peace and union might be preserved. At last one of the senior brethren” (Mr. Pawson, the destroyer of Wesley’s quarto Shakspeare) “proposed that we should commit the matter to God by putting the question to the lot, considering that the oracles of God declare that ‘the lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty;’ and again that ‘the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord;’ and considering also that we have the example of the Apostles themselves in a matter which we thought, all things considered, of



less importance. We accordingly prepared the lots, and four of us prayed. God was surely then present, yea, His glory filled the room. Almost all the preachers were in tears; and as they afterwards confessed, felt an undoubted assurance that God Himself would decide. Mr. Adam Clarke was then called upon to draw the lot, which was ‘You shall not administer the sacrament the ensuing year.’ All were satisfied. All submitted. All was peace. Every conscience seemed to testify that every heart said, ‘It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.’ A minute was then formed according to the previous explanation of the lots, that the sacrament should not be administered in our connexion for the ensuing year, except in London. The prohibition reaches the clergy of the Church of England, as well as the other brethren.

“We do assure you, dear brethren, that we should have been perfectly resigned if the lot had fallen on the other side. Yea, we should, as far as Christian prudence and expediency would have justified, have encouraged the administration of the Lord’s Supper by the preachers; because we had not a doubt but God was uncommonly present on the occasion, and did Himself decide.

“Signed in behalf of the Conference,

“ALEXANDER MATHER, President,

“THOMAS COKE, Secretary ”

This curious transaction—a rare and grotesque combination of absurdity, profaneness, and superstition, scarcely surpassed even in the annals of Methodism—



closed the question for a year; but at the expiration of that time it was, of course, reopened. Conference judiciously contrived to throw the responsibility and the odium of dealing with it on their people themselves by allowing "the sacrament" to be administered where the society was unanimous, or nearly so, for that course. The circular of Conference on this and sundry other subjects in 1794 is again noteworthy; we transcribe one or two of the resolutions, commending them to the consideration of the Wesleyans of the present day:—  
 "1st, All ecclesiastical titles, such as Reverend, &c., shall be laid aside, as also gowns, bands, &c. 2nd, Preaching in Church hours shall not be permitted, except for special reasons. 3rd, As the Lord's Supper has not been administered except when the Society has been unanimous for it and would not be contented without it, it is now agreed that the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in future, when the union and concord of the Society can be preserved without it. 4th, The preachers shall not perform the office of baptism, except for the desirable ends of love and concord," &c.—Smith, ii. 691, 692.

Mr. Smith's chapter upon the Scriptural character of the "Wesleyan Methodist Church" is instructive. He evidently feels himself, and the hyper-hierarchical system of which he is the champion, to be in a somewhat awkward position. In fact, Wesleyanism, as settled by the Conference, is between two fires, to both of which it is impossible, in the nature of things, to make efficient answer at the same time. On the one hand, there is the Church with a polity unquestionably



handed down from very ancient times, and, as we firmly believe, coeval with Christianity itself; with rulers claiming to derive their office and authority from the Apostles; with ministers commissioned through certain and definite channels—channels which the whole Church for ages recognized as the only legitimate ones for conveying such a commission, and which those only reject who have separated from the Church of their fathers. On the other hand, there is the thorough-going Dissenting system, which is Whiggery applied to matters ecclesiastical. This system regards the individual congregation as the source of authority, and the supreme and sufficient referee in matters doctrinal and ceremonial. On this view, the minister is the minister not so much of Christ as of the congregation; having such powers and duties as it may entrust to him; and holding his commission from it. It is true, indeed, that the most thorough-going Dissenter professes to regard the Bible as his rule of faith. That, however, makes little difference, if the interpretation is left unrestrictedly in his own hands. It has been said, not without much truth, that it comes to much the same thing, whether a man writes a Bible for himself or interprets the one he has as he pleases. This system, which its friends would call religious liberty, its foes religious licence, is the one to which strong leanings have manifested themselves from time to time in the connexion, and which, soon after Wesley's death, found an advocate in Mr. Kilham. This gentleman was, agreeably to those instincts of self-preservation which have always strongly marked the proceedings of Con-



ference, expelled in 1796, and became the founder of the New Connexion.

Thus does Methodism stand between two systems, with the disadvantages of both, and the advantages of neither. Its ministers have not the *prestige* and innate authority which attaches to those of an ancient and Catholic community; while they claim a power not less irresponsible and absolute than any which has ever been challenged as of divine right by the most despotic hierarchy the Church has seen. An awkward consciousness of these things pervades Mr. Smith's defence of the Wesleyan ministry. He addresses himself first to the Churchmen, and handles his argument in the shallow mode usual amongst Dissenters. He first misapprehends (we use the term in charity—we *might* say, misstates) the grounds on which the Church rests her claims, and then triumphantly refutes his own misapprehension. A well-informed man ought not to need to be told that the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession is not affected by denying that St. Peter was ever at Rome, nor even by the impossibility of proving by positive evidence that each and every Bishop in the line was canonically consecrated. It is no new discovery that the words *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβύτερος* are applied in the New Testament to the same individuals; and it is quite obvious that that fact goes no way at all towards showing that the office and authority termed by us episcopal cannot be traced in the New Testament times. But had Mr. Smith been blessed with a fair amount of those logical powers which distinguished the founder of his sect, he would have seen ere this that the



principles on which he takes his stand as against the Church ought, in consistency, to carry him into Congregationalism. We must admit, however, that he makes out a better case against that antagonist from the opposite quarter. He triumphantly proves against the Independent, and Dissenters of that stamp, that presbyters ought to "rule, lead, tend, and govern" their flocks; as also that the Apostolic and primitive Churches formed one body, though of many members. But he cannot, or will not, see that although all this vindicates his sect, *supposing it to be the ancient Church of the land, it utterly condemns it when it is otherwise.* If the laity should be ruled by their presbyters, as Mr. Smith decidedly thinks they ought to be, what was the original revolt of the Wesleyans from the Church into which they were baptized, but a wicked rebellion? If the various Christian Churches should form one society, and the principle of "Connexionalism" as exemplified in that closely compacted body the Wesleyan Methodists is so thoroughly Scriptural and Apostolic, what else was it than a sacrilegious schism, wrought in defiance of Scripture, the Apostles, and the Church Catholic also, when Mr. Smith's co-religionists would be satisfied with nothing less than setting themselves up as a complete and independent Church to themselves? Mr. Smith, in his hot pursuit of the "Low Dissenters," pushes the rout too far, and lays himself open to a most dangerous assault from behind. Like the man in Hogarth's famous picture of "The Election," who sits on the end of the hanging sign, and saws through the beam before him, his most zealous



endeavours only hasten his own downfall. On this point, and, indeed, on several others in the Wesleyanism system, those words of Isaac Taylor are striking—"In respect of the position of the Methodist ministers towards the people, which is that of irresponsible 'lords of God's heritage,' the professedly Christian world is thus parted—on the one side stand all Protestant Churches, Episcopal and non-Episcopal, Wesleyanism excepted; on the other side stands the Church of Rome, with its sympathizing adherents, the malcontents of the English Church, and the Wesleyan Conference. The position, maintained *alone* by a Protestant body, must be regarded as false in principle, and as in an extreme degree ominous<sup>1</sup>."—Wesley and Methodism, p. 268.

<sup>1</sup> The claims made by Conference on behalf of the Wesleyan ministers are scarcely estimated in their true extent by those outside of the Connexion. We transcribe the following statement of them given by the Rev. J. B. Marsden [Christian Churches and Sects, vol. ii. pp. 442, 443] as that of the Conference of 1835 and its organs:—

"Christ has empowered *the ministers* of the Gospel to govern or regulate the Church by salutary discipline: He has committed *to them* the *keys of the Church*: in every section of the Church of Christ *the pastor must bear the keys*, or he is not the pastor of Christ's own making; it is for the ministers of Christ, the pastors of the Church, to reprove, rebuke with all authority, admonish, warn, and finally, when *they judge necessary*, to reject offenders from Church communion." "Jesus Christ has not empowered the Church to interfere with the minister in the use of the keys." "The ministry makes the Church, rather than the Church the ministry." "Every thing flows from this source. Humanly speaking, the ministry is *the centre of light and power*: *all things* grow out of it." "The minister of Christ is your judge as God's minister, and you are not to judge him." [Yet



We believe that no such phenomenon was designed or foreseen by Wesley himself. Exalted as were his notions of the value and importance of his society, it can hardly be doubted that he regarded it only as a sort of evangelizing supplement to the Established Church. To hold otherwise is to convict him of disingenuousness and folly. Of the former, because he steadily disclaimed any intention of separating from the Church, even while pushed on by his confederates into acts of schism; of the latter, because, while the society is minutely and excessively organized, it is, at least as Wesley left it, wholly wanting in all the essentials of an independent ecclesiastical community. It is not to be believed that he dreamed of a body of preachers, whom he could not be brought to recognize as clergymen at all, exercising a spiritual despotism over the faith and practice of the members of his societies, such as, if attempted by a priest of the Church, or any number of priests, would bring down an irresistible storm of indignation. The Minutes of Conference are the statutes of the Methodist societies. Its members are elected by itself: it is purely self-perpetuated. Its deliberations are secret, its authority absolute, without repentance and without appeal. All is on the platform of the narrowest and most despotic oligarchy. This kind of constitution is thoroughly according to Wesley's auto-

Yet something like a quarter of a million of Englishmen actually submit themselves to a priestly authority thus audacious in its claims, and created some sixty years ago by the mere arbitrary fiat of a set of men whom the founder of their sect himself could never be brought to recognize as clergy, or as in any way constituting a Church at all!



cratic temperament ; it is, moreover, intelligible enough if we believe him to have regarded the connexion as a machinery auxiliary to the Church, intended to reach the masses of the people, at that time certainly neglected, in Wesley's opinion unprovided for, by the regular Church system ; but it is altogether an unaccountable and incomprehensible polity if we take the orthodox Wesleyan view, and believe that Wesley meant it to serve as the scheme for a complete ecclesiastical constitution.

Hence from the time of Wesley's death to the present day, continual convulsions have attended the application of Wesley's regimen to purposes it was never meant to serve. The most serious of these took place during Dr. Bunting's ministry, and in almost all he bore a part, generally a leading part. His personal authority was for many years greater in the society than that ever exercised by any individual, except Wesley himself, and it was always exerted in one direction, i. e. stern repression of any attempts at reform, either of doctrine or discipline. His inflexibility on these points undoubtedly has very seriously diminished the numbers of the society, but has greatly contributed to its homogeneousness and discipline. The Wesleyans may now justly boast of their unanimity. It is a point in which they contrast most advantageously with other denominations, and even with the Church. Yet this excellence, when examined, is seen at once to be not the unity of the Catholic Church, but the singularity of a sect. Wesleyans differ amongst themselves like other people ; but when they differ the agitation is soon settled by a secession, and the founding of a new sect ;



the new ideas will not assimilate to the old economy; those who hold them withdraw of their own accord, or failing that, are expelled.

The first volume of the life of Dr. Bunting, the only volume as yet (1864) published, dwells on the childhood and youth of its subject, and on the earlier and less important days of his ministry. It does this with a minuteness which is so curious as at first to be amusing, but which soon becomes tiresome. Much may be justly excused to the partiality of a son: but we could wish Mr. Bunting, in composing his biography, had advised with some sensible literary friend, if such he has—above all, with one not a Methodist. Writers of that persuasion have some striking and very disagreeable affinities with the *Univers*, and with Cardinal Wiseman, in his Ultramontane moods. They hang in profound admiration over the words and deeds of the man they delight to honour as all alike wonderful; they expatiate with zealous adulation over the most trifling details of his person and his belongings; they call upon us to receive every such crumb of information devoutly and thankfully, and to say grace as over a feast of fat things. These writers aim at unction; and that being of all graces the least self-conscious, they fall into the nauseous extreme but a short step removed from it—viz. an oily credulity hardly distinguishable from cant. The Life of Dr. Bunting is not by any means a bad specimen of the class of works to which it belongs. Mr. Bunting might write well if he would take off the spiritual spectacles through which he feels it *de rigueur* to look at every thing, and would mortify



the affectation of crowding his pages with fragments of hymns often either stale or stupid, and with Scripture phraseology coolly subsuming the worthies of his own sect under terms belonging to apostles and martyrs, or perhaps to One greater still. But the Methodist has his reliquary as well as the Romanist; the latter garnishes it with rags and bones, the former with those petty and sordid details of the lower life which can never be transfigured by being handled as sacred subjects, but rather, when so treated, vulgarize the language and style which should be kept sacred, and mar its efficacy when it is wanted for its proper ends.

We need not illustrate these remarks by an extract. They will be intelligible to any Churchman who opens Mr. Bunting's biography almost at random. Neither may we—tempting as the subject is, and closely connected with Wesley and his work—enlarge upon the subject of revivals, or of the instantaneous conversions, marked then as now by bodily manifestations, which gave such notoriety to the early stages of the Wesleyan movement.

To such pretended marvels, relied on as they are by Methodists as proofs that their new teaching is of God, the witty remarks of Tertullian on the Gnostic miracles may, with a little accommodation, be applied:—*“Volo igitur et virtutes eorum proferri; nisi quod agnosco maximam virtutem eorum quâ Apostolos in perversum æmulantur, illi enim de insanis sanos faciebant, isti de sanis insanos faciunt.”*—*De Præscriptione*, ch. xxx.

It is dangerous to prophesy, and yet there seems no great risk in predicting that Methodism must either



undergo a thorough change of principles and polity or fall into the languishing state which has crept over more than one once-flourishing and predominant sect. That the process of slow consumption has already commenced seems likely enough. We do not hear now-a-days of those vast ingatherings of people which were the triumphs of the first preachers. Wesleyans form a circle—very peculiar, very marked, very respectable, often wealthy, but seeming to dwindle rather than enlarge. The excessive interference with the personal spiritual concerns of its members, which is part of the system, always will and always ought to prevent its overspreading the land. Methodism, of all Protestant denominations, is the most un-Protestant. Like the Confessional, it takes the spiritual charge of the individual out of his own hands. It will not be satisfied without putting its seal on the very thoughts. Nothing in the religious life is left private or uncontrolled. As a consequence, it never reaches to the depths of the soul at all; it is cognizant of nothing that cannot be talked of and discussed at a meeting. From religious experiences so handled all freshness and spirit soon evaporate; and the hyper-organized machinery intended to generate godliness turns out only a spurious and self-complacent pietism. So it is too often, we fear, with Wesleyanism; and unless this artificial and intrusive discipline on the one hand, and its highly oligarchical government on the other, be largely modified, its days of popularity and extension are past for ever. And yet reforms in this direction could hardly be carried without driving large numbers of Methodists,



and those of the better sort, back to that Church which they never ought to have left, and which, perhaps, had not their own rise coincided with the period of her own deepest sloth and worldliness, might, as we cannot but think she ought, have found means to direct and to utilize their strong zeal and earnest aims at a high standard of religiousness.



## ESSAY II.

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*Essays and Reviews.* J. W. Parker and Son.

THE appearance of this volume is a sign of the times, and a somewhat portentous one. If it were the production of an individual, it would still be sufficiently remarkable, for religious speculations such as characterize the *Essays and Reviews* do not adventure themselves into the world without a sort of consciousness that appreciation at least, if not welcome, awaits them. The laws of supply and demand have an instinct of their own, and they operate in philosophy and theology as well as in commerce. Seldom have we in these, or in any other matters, occasion to say "The hour is come but not the man." "The theologian," Mr. Jowett observes, "may have peace in the thought that he is subject to the conditions of his age rather than one of its moving powers." The *rôle* of the thinker, like that of the statesman, seems to be provided for him by some mightier overruling than mere human agencies. His ideas, and the words which convey them, fall on the minds of his generation like sparks on the tinder, and light up a flame which searches through and through existing systems and institutions, consuming the wood,



the hay, and the stubble; leaving unscathed only what is of durable, because of diviner, material. Such thoughts as these must not be so insisted on as to put out of sight the personal responsibility which attaches to every Christian man; and in the highest degree to those whose abilities enable them to influence others for good or for evil; yet they are true so far as they go, and they give to a bundle of essays on the religious topics of the day, such as that before us, a twofold interest. We are led to think of it not only as an exposition of the sentiments and conclusions of certain thinkers, but as an index also of the thoughts which are working in the minds of men about us. In both points of view the Essays and Reviews are well worthy of attention.

Turning for the present away from the reflections suggested by the mere fact that seven learned and distinguished members of our two ancient Universities—five of them, by-the-bye, of Oxford, two of them Professors of that University, and two others entrusted with chief responsibility in important educational establishments—should be banded together in the joint production of a series of essays like this, let us state the conclusions which these able writers have undertaken to recommend to the Christian public, and more especially to their fellow-Churchmen. And here we must draw a line of demarcation between two of the essays before us and the other five which are bound up with them in the same covers. The first essay, by Dr. Temple, “On the Education of the World,” contains little or nothing which need give pain or occasion



surprise. It exhibits the broad views of the writer, of course, and is written with a certain tendency to over-generalization and viewiness. But it is little more than an elaborate and sustained exemplification of the common-place analogy which may be drawn between the growth and education of the individual man and those of the human race. Its scope is to exhibit the effect upon the race at large of the peculiarities of each nation and age, and to trace in such effect the overruling wisdom which reaches from one end to another, and causes all to work together for the progress of mankind to perfection. The objections to such a theory are as familiar as the theory itself, and we forbear to particularize them—for our limited space must be rather devoted to the strange companions with which Dr. Temple is associated. Along with him, however, may be ranged—at least from our present view-point—Mr. Pattison's essay on "The Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688—1750." This very able tractate is almost entirely of a historical character, and affords little opportunity for discussing and enforcing any peculiar opinions which the writer himself may hold. Neither is it like Mr. Pattison to force such opportunity when it is not offered to him by the nature of his undertaking. He is one of those patient thinkers and painstaking writers who carefully possess themselves of the phenomena belonging to the subject before them, add little *de suo*, and endeavour to derive their theories from a strict examination of facts and documents. His essay has not the genius and originality which distinguish some others in this volume, neither



has it that immediate attraction for the reader which is exercised by discussions of questions which are in daily agitation; yet it is perhaps for solid and durable worth the most important literary contribution of the whole seven. The sixty years following the Revolution of 1688 are, generally speaking, far too superficially and contemptuously thought of. They are to many amongst ourselves pretty much what “the dark ages” were in popular estimation some forty years ago, and that for pretty much the same reason. They are little known, and are therefore much despised. Mr. Pattison traces with acuteness and intelligence the general bearings of religious opinion and controversy in these years, and exhibits the results of much reading and conscientious investigation with clearness and precision, though in a somewhat laboured and awkward style. He shows—we think successfully—that the Christian writers of those years did their part, and that part a necessary though not a noble one, to advance the progress of Christian doctrine, and to challenge, as against the besetting temptations of society, the obedience of their contemporaries to Christian precepts. His summary of what was, and what was not, effected by the Christian advocates whom it falls within his plan to consider, is instructive:—

Upon the whole, the writings of that period are serviceable to us chiefly as showing what can and what cannot be effected by common-sense thinking in theology. It is of little consequence to inquire whether or not the objections of the Deists and Socinians were removed by the answers brought to meet them. Perhaps, on the whole, we might be borne out in saying that the defence is at least as good as the attack; and so, that even on the ground of common



reason, the Christian evidences may be arranged in such a way as to balance the common-sense improbability of the supernatural—that “there are three chances to one for revelation, and only two against it.” (*Tracts for the Times*, No. 85.) Had not circumstances given a new direction to religious interests, the Deistical controversy might have gone on indefinitely, and the “amœbæan strain of objection and reply, *et cantare pares et respondere parati*”—have been prolonged to this day without any other result. But that result forces on the mind the suggestion that either religious faith has no existence, or that it must be to be reached by some other road than that of the “trial of the witnesses.” It is a *reductio ad absurdum* of common-sense philosophy, of home-baked theology, when we find that the result of the whole is that “it is safer to believe in a God, lest, if there should happen to be one, He might send us to hell for denying His existence.” (Maurice, *Essays*, p. 236.) If a religion be wanted which shall debase instead of elevating, this should be its creed. If the religious history of the eighteenth century proves any thing, it is this:—That good sense, the best good sense, when it sets to work with the materials of human nature and Scripture to construct a religion, will find its way to an ethical code, irreproachable in its contents, and based on a just estimate and wise observation of the facts of life, ratified by Divine sanctions in the shape of hope and fear, of future rewards and penalties of obedience and disobedience. This the eighteenth century did and did well. It has enforced the truths of natural morality with a solidity of argument and variety of proof which they have not received since the Stoical epoch, if then. But there its ability ended. When it came to the supernatural part of Christianity its embarrassment began. It was forced to keep it as much in the background as possible, or to bolster it up by lame and inadequate reasonings. The philosophy of common sense had done its own work; it attempted more only to show, by its failure, that some higher organon was needed for the establishment of supernatural truth. The career of the evidential school, its success and failure—its success in vindicating the ethical part of Christianity and the regulative aspect of revealed truth, its failure in establishing the supernatural and speculative part, have enriched the history of doctrine with a complete refutation of that method as an instrument of theological investigation.—*Essays and Reviews*, pp. 295—297.



We have noticed the first and the sixth of the seven papers comprised in this volume of Essays and Reviews—papers which the reader is carefully apprised at the beginning are “written by their several authors in entire independence of each other, and without concert or comparison.” It is only due to Dr. Temple and Mr. Pattison, the authors of the first and the sixth of these papers, that this should be stated and recollected, for it is to the other five that we feel it our duty to direct special attention. Though, with one exception, of no extraordinary brilliancy, these five compositions are so unequivocal and so significant in their doctrinal tendencies, that their composition by authors of such station and standing as those who own them, and their emission by one of our leading publishers, is not a little noteworthy. We begin with that which stands last in the volume, Professor Jowett’s essay “On the Interpretation of Scripture.” This essay, though it bears marks of having been finished roughly—the threads of ideas being often broken short off with a hastily written hint thrown in for the reader, in the shape of a parenthesis, as to the direction in which the sequel may be searched for—is still not only the longest and most elaborate, but both in matter and in style by far the most attractive, in the volume. We do not, indeed, observe in it much which need cause surprise to those who have perused the author’s other writings. He is, perhaps, more outspoken, and the conclusions to which his method of dealing with Holy Scripture points are less ambiguously indicated. But, on the whole, the essay is little more than the formal enuncia-



tion, illustration, and defence of principles of exegesis rendered familiar to the student by Professor Jowett's application of them in his work on certain of St. Paul's Epistles. The method in which the Greek Professor of Oxford wishes to deal with Scripture is easily explained. Towards the conclusion of his article he tells us himself:—

Of what has been said, this is the sum—"That Scripture, like other books, has one meaning, which is to be gathered from itself without reference to the adaptations of Fathers or Divines: and without regard to *a priori* notions about its nature and origin. It is to be interpreted like other books, with attention to the character of its authors, and the prevailing state of civilization and knowledge, with allowance for peculiarities of style and language, and modes of thought and figures of speech. Yet not without a sense that as we read there grows upon us the witness of God in the world, anticipating in a rude and primitive age the truth that was to be, shining more and more unto the perfect day in the life of Christ, which again is reflected from different points of view in the teaching of His Apostles."

The essay consists of an elaborate attempt to prove that commentators hitherto have made it their business rather to discover what Scripture *may be made to mean* than *what it does mean*; that the whole theological and doctrinal system of the Church is not based on Scripture, but is evolved according to general laws, which control the tendencies of speculation, and according to the exigencies of the Church; and, when so evolved, is wont afterwards to be sought and found in Scripture; that no doctrinal system is discoverable or deducible from the teaching of the Bible, and that when we regard the Bible from any such view-point, we entirely miss the spirit of the writers. Mr. Jowett's motto in



following up his argument is "thorough;" he spares nothing, and sticks at nothing. The audacity of some of his statements is startling indeed:—

Nor for any of the higher or supernatural views of inspiration is there any foundation in the Gospels or Epistles. There is no appearance in their writings that the Evangelists or Apostles had any inward gift, or were subject to any power external to them different from that of preaching or teaching which they daily exercised; nor do they any where lead us to suppose that they were free from error or infirmity. St. Paul writes like a Christian teacher, exhibiting all the emotions and vicissitudes of human feeling; speaking, indeed, with authority, but hesitating in difficult cases, and more than once correcting himself, corrected, too, by the course of events in his expectation of the coming of Christ. The Evangelist "who saw it, bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true"—(John xix. 35). Another Evangelist does not profess to be an original narrator, but only "to set forth in order a declaration of what eye-witnesses had delivered," like many others whose writings have not been preserved to us (Luke i. 1, 2). And the result is in accordance with the simple profession and style in which they describe themselves; there is no appearance, that is to say, of insincerity or want of faith; but neither is there perfect accuracy or agreement. One supposes the original dwelling-place of our Lord's parents to have been Bethlehem (Matthew ii. 1. 22), another Nazareth (Luke ii. 4); they trace His genealogy in different ways; one mentions the thieves blaspheming, another has preserved to after-ages the record of the penitent thief; they appear to differ about the day and hour of the Crucifixion; the narrative of the woman who anointed our Lord's feet with ointment is told in all four, each narrative having more or less considerable variations. These are a few instances of the differences which arose in the traditions of the earliest ages respecting the history of our Lord. But he who wishes to investigate the character of the sacred writings should not be afraid to make a catalogue of them all with the view of estimating their cumulative weight. (For it is obvious that the answer which would be admitted in the case of a single discrepancy, will not be the true answer when there are many.) He should further consider that the narratives in which these discrepancies



occur are short and partly identical—a cycle of tradition beyond which the knowledge of the early Fathers never travels, though, if all the things that Jesus said and did had been written down, “the world itself could not have contained the books that would have been written”—(John xx. 30; xxi. 25). For the proportion which these narratives bear to the whole subject, as well as their relation to one another, is an important element in the estimation of differences. In the same way, he who would understand the nature of prophecy in the Old Testament, should have the courage to examine how far its details were minutely fulfilled. The absence of such a fulfilment may further lead him to discover that he took the letter for the spirit in expecting it.—*Essays and Reviews*, pp. 345—347.

Consider, for example, the extraordinary and unreasonable importance attached to single words, sometimes of doubtful meaning, in reference to any of the following subjects:—1, Divorce; 2, Marriage with a Wife's Sister; 3, Inspiration; 4, the Personality of the Holy Spirit; 5, Infant Baptism; 6, Episcopacy; 7, Divine Right of Kings; 8, Original Sin. There is, indeed, a kind of mystery in the way in which the chance words of a simple narrative, the occurrence of some accidental event, the use even of a figure of speech, or a mistranslation of a word in Latin or English, have affected the thoughts of future ages and distant countries. Nothing so slight that it has not been caught at; nothing so plain that it may not be explained away. What men have brought to the text they have also found there; what has received no interpretation or witness, either in the customs of the Church or in “the thoughts of many hearts,” is still “an unknown tongue” to them. It is with Scripture as with oratory, its effect partly depends on the preparation in the mind or in circumstances for the reception of it. There is no use of Scripture, no quotation or even misquotation of a word which is not a power in the world, when it embodies the spirit of a great movement or is echoed by the voice of a large party.—Pp. 358, 359.

To attribute to St. Paul or the Twelve the abstract notion of Christian truth which afterwards sprang up in the Catholic Church, is the same sort of anachronism as to attribute to them a system of philosophy. It is the same error as to attribute to Homer the ideas of Thales or Heraclitus, or to Thales the more developed principles of Aristotle and Plato. Many persons who have no diffi-



culty in tracing the growth of institutions, yet seem to fail in recognizing the more subtle progress of an idea. It is hard to imagine the absence of conceptions with which we are familiar; to go back to the germ of what we know only in maturity; to give up what has grown to us, and become a part of our minds. In the present case, however, the development is not difficult to prove. The statements of Scripture are unaccountable if we deny it; the silence of Scripture is equally unaccountable. Absorbed as St. Paul was in the person of Christ with an intensity of faith and love of which in modern days and at this distance of time we can scarcely form a conception—high as he raised the dignity of his Lord above all things in heaven and earth—looking to Him as the Creator of all things, and the head of quick and dead, he does not speak of Him as “equal to the Father,” or “of one substance with the Father.” Much of the language of the Epistles (passages, for example, such as Romans i. 2; Philippians ii. 6) would lose their meaning if distributed in alternate clauses between our Lord’s humanity and divinity. Still greater difficulties would be introduced into the Gospels by the attempt to identify them with the Creeds. We should have to suppose that He was and was not tempted; that when He prayed to His Father He prayed also to Himself; that He knew and did not know “of that hour” of which He as well as the angels were ignorant. How could He have said, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” or, “Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me?” How could He have doubted whether, “when the Son cometh, He shall find faith upon the earth?” These simple and touching words have to be taken out of their natural meaning and connexion to be made the theme of apologetic discourses, if we insist on reconciling them with the distinctions of later ages.—Pp. 354, 355.

We must observe, in fairness to Mr. Jowett, that in the sequel of the last quoted passage he objects not only to the Athanasian, but to any other precise and definite rule of faith, as, for instance, the Unitarian; and that of the “principles, rules, or truths mentioned” in his enumeration in another of the above extracts, “many have sufficient grounds;” but then “the weak-



ness is the attempt to derive them from Scripture." In what sense Professor Jowett holds that each and every one of the Thirty-nine Articles is agreeable to Scripture, as he must have repeatedly declared that he does, we forbear to ask, along with other painful questions of a kindred nature. It is only too plain that the teaching of the above, and of many other passages, is directly subversive of the doctrinal system of our Church, and directly antagonistic to her cardinal principles. The three Creeds are imposed on English Churchmen on the very ground that they "may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture," which is just what Mr. Jowett denies of them; and it is held to be the characteristic glory and boast of our Church that she requires as terms of communion, and lays down as her standard of doctrine, nothing beyond what Scripture determines, and the Œcumenical Councils and ancient Fathers of the Church have collected therefrom. But Scripture, according to Mr. Jowett, is no doctrinal standard at all; and it is these very Fathers and Councils, so repeatedly cited by our Church and all her leading writers as authoritative, which have, in the judgment of Mr. Jowett, overlaid Scripture with a thick deposit of dogma, hiding from mankind the pure ore of spiritual teaching beneath; and it is these which exemplify the very influences which must be first of all discarded if we would approach Scripture in the true spirit of an interpreter. We cannot follow Mr. Jowett through the series of attacks he makes upon a multitude of tenets generally received as part of "the faith once delivered to the saints." The sweep of his criticisms



may be judged of, and their rashness estimated, by his mode of dealing with the doctrine of Original Sin. He says, "The justice of God, 'who rewardeth every man according to his works,' and the Christian scheme of redemption has (*sic*) been staked on two figurative expressions of St. Paul, to which there is no parallel in any other part of Scripture (1 Cor. xv. 22—'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made live,' and the corresponding passage in Rom. v. 12), notwithstanding the declaration of the Old Testament, as also of the New, 'Every soul shall bear its own iniquity,' and 'Neither this man sinned nor his parents.'"—P 361.

Elsewhere Mr. Jowett hints pretty plainly his opinion that the progress of discovery has disproved the Mosaic narrative of the creation of man: he seems quite prepared to admit that the human race overspread the earth not from one but from many centres; and that it may have originated through the development of species. If all this be so, what becomes of the headship of our race in Adam; and again in the antitype, the Second Adam? What becomes of the Incarnation in all its deeper bearings and significances? What of the Atonement, the doctrine of which is conditioned by that of the Incarnation? What of our justification? What of the general resurrection, if we be in no real sense members of a risen Head? What of the whole system of the sacraments? It is hard indeed to believe that Mr. Jowett always thoroughly believes his own arguments. When he speaks of the doctrine of Original Sin as "staked upon two figurative expressions," it is scarcely possible to avoid indignation at a misrepresen-



tation so transparent. It is useless to waste a word in proving, what every tyro in theological reading would easily demonstrate, that the passages themselves and the doctrine contained in them are not inconsistent with individual responsibility. We rather remark that Mr. Jowett quotes two single verses, and intimates that the doctrine in question rests on them alone. We wholly deny that these are the only two passages of Scripture which vindicate the teaching of our Church in her Ninth Article. But if they were so, it must surely be plain to any one who carefully studies the whole of the chapters from which these verses are taken, that it is not on isolated figurative expressions, but on the deep and broad basis of the whole of the Apostle's argument, that the doctrine would, in fact, be built. It crops up, perhaps, more explicitly in the particular verses Mr. Jowett refers to, but it underlies the whole reasoning of the weighty chapters themselves in which the verses occur. Assume the doctrine which, on Mr. Jowett's own admission, is indicated in these verses, and the meaning, both of the verses themselves and of the whole context, and their place and scope in the general argument of the Epistles, becomes intelligible: abandon the doctrine, in deference to the difficulties felt about it by Mr. Jowett (in common, be it observed, with the Socinians), as false, and mark the results. Either St. Paul means to teach it in the above passages, or he does not. If he does, we convict him of error, and that on a very fundamental point: if he does not, he uses language which could not fail to bewilder and mislead in a manner perilous to the salvation of his disciples. On the whole, we shall



get no further through the intricacies of this difficult subject than Pascal, who says—stating the difficulty, however, in language which, although defensible on the authority of St. Augustine, our Church has deliberately abstained from sanctioning<sup>1</sup>,—"What can be more contrary to the rules of our wretched justice than to damn eternally an infant incapable of volition for an offence wherein he seems to have had no share, and which was committed six thousand years before he was born? Certainly nothing shocks us more rudely than this doctrine; and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves. Man is more inconceivable without this mystery, than the mystery is conceivable to man."—*Pensées* ii. 5. 4.

But, in truth, it is useless to argue such a point with a thinker like Mr. Jowett. He taxes orthodox theologians with coming to the consideration of Scripture prepared beforehand with a doctrinal system which they deem it their duty to discover there. No one is more manifestly guilty of this kind of prejudgment than Mr. Jowett himself. He has made up his mind

<sup>1</sup> The Declaration appended to the Office for Public Baptism of Infants asserts: "It is certain by God's Word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." This is borrowed from *The Institution of a Christian Man* (1537), which runs thus, p. 35: "By the sacrament of Baptism they do also obtain remission of their sins, the grace and favour of God, and be made thereby the very sons of God. In-somuch as infants and children, dying in their infancy, shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, *and else not.*" The omission of the last words in King Edward's Prayer Book of 1549 is most significant.



that certain tenets are not to be believed, or at least not believed as doctrines of Scripture—Original Sin for instance. Hence, when a text comes in his way in which the Church has been wont to hold the objectionable dogma to be contained, he sets to work at once to explain away the obvious meaning of the words before him. It has always seemed to the simple and straightforward Christian, and indeed not less so to the learned philologist and theologian, that on many points, at all events, the teaching of Scripture is clear and definite. But an acquaintance with Mr. Jowett's hermeneutics would warn such persons that they are somewhat overhasty. The sentences, the grammar, the syntax, subjects, predicates, and all the elements of a plain piece of didactic composition may be there, as intelligible as possible, and pointing to some Catholic article of faith—the personality of the Holy Spirit perhaps. “Effugiet tamen hæc vincula.” Mr. Jowett might laugh at all the theological locksmiths that ever tried to forge doctrinal holdfasts. He has solvents, before the application of which the most solid seeming scheme of doctrines will crumble to nothing. Now St. Paul is speaking according to “a mode of thought” of his times, and the statements are only relatively true: now the expression is figurative, or allegorical, and cannot be pressed into any precise meaning whatsoever; least of all that which the Church has always attached to it: now the sacred writer is availing himself of an *argumentum ad hominem*—the reasoning is only *ex concessis*, and by consequence is of no weight to us: now we come upon a Rabbinical dogma, which may be dis-



missed at once ; did not the Rabbis utter many puerilities ? At one time, again, we are bidden to remember that “ when our Saviour came into the world the Greek language was itself in a state of degeneracy and decay ;” and are forbidden to argue from its grammatical meaning on the usual principles of logic and criticism which would properly apply to more exact and classical writers : at another time it is admitted indeed (as in the texts above quoted respecting Original Sin, and the Personality of our Lord) that Catholic doctrines do at first sight seem to be intended by the writer, but then there are other texts which may be brought up against them, and the two sets, when laid side by side, are pronounced plainly contradictory, and it is readily inferred that we must not try to systematize. Mr. Jowett’s handling of Scripture reminds one of Tertullian’s characteristic description of the logic employed by the heretics of his day :—“*Sequitur qui dialecticam instituit, artificem struendi et destruendi, versipellem, in sententiis coactam, in conjecturis duram, in argumentis operariam contentionum, molestam etiam sibi ipsi, omnia retractantem ne quid omnino tractaverit.*”—*De Præscriptione Hæret.* ch. vii.

One of Mr. Jowett’s most amusing traits is the persuasion he has that he is bringing in simpler and more certain principles of exegesis. The truth is that Scripture in his plastic hands becomes what it has been profanely called by a Romish controversialist—a nose of wax, which may be pulled any way at the good pleasure of him who lists to handle it. It may, under Mr. Jowett’s manipulation, mean any thing ; or, and



that in preference, nothing—at least nothing definite and particular. His essay may well bear for a motto *Fumus ex fulgore*. If we could become disciples of the Oxford Professor of Greek, the Bible would seem to us of all books the most deceitful. Inviting us by winning and gracious promises of truths for the head and heart—truths on which the spirit might stay itself as divinely authenticated for its satisfaction—it would seem then to us to keep its promise only to the ear while breaking it to the hope; we should be baffled in all attempts to realize its statements or reduce them to consistent results; we should have before us the most gigantic instance the world ever saw of magnificent promises coupled with the slenderest performances; and that in a subject where, above all others, such imposition is wicked and cruel.

After the shifting quicksands across which we have had to follow Professor Jowett, it is a relief to betake ourselves to solid ground, though it be not of the most inviting character. We notice, therefore, next, the essay of the only lay contributor to this volume—that of Mr. C. W. Goodwin, “On the Mosaic Cosmogony.” Mr Goodwin does indeed deal in no subtleties, but plainly avows his opinion that the Mosaic narrative of the creation is utterly irreconcilable with the discoveries of modern physical science, assigns ably and clearly his reasons for being so convinced, and, in conclusion, examines and condemns the attempts which have been made by Dean Buckland, Dr. Chalmers, Hugh Miller, and others, to show the contrary. It is, of course, argued from this inconsistency, that the



Mosaic account is not to be esteemed a narrative of facts ; and Mr. Goodwin betrays also the little respect he has for the writer as a spiritual teacher by attributing to him the grossest anthropomorphism. The words, "Let us make man in our own image," are, it appears, to be explained by those in a following chapter—"Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image!" It is "explaining away" the phrase to interpret it that God made man "perfect," "sinless;" and "the Pentateuch abounds in passages showing that the Hebrews contemplated the Divine Being in the visible form of a man." We need hardly give further specimens of Mr. Goodwin's qualifications and bias as an interpreter of Holy Scripture; nor would he be likely to respect the authority of St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 7) and St. James (iii. 9) as to the true meaning of the phrase in question. We would therefore simply observe, as regards the general argument of his essay, that we shall, for our parts, rest satisfied about the whole subject so long as we know, as we do, that some of the ablest astronomers and geologists have not found science and Scripture antagonistic. We may add, that if the *savans* found their present theories to be in full accordance with the Mosaic narrative, it is hard to see how the scientific enlightenment which would now be so great a proof to them of the superhuman wisdom of Scripture could have been other than a hopeless stumbling-block to all past ages; and moreover, that this very present accordance of Scripture and science would be of evil omen for the future, since it is certain that



the further progress of discovery would place the two more hopelessly at variance than ever.

The Rev. Professor Baden Powell has a characteristic essay on the "Study of the Evidences of Christianity," the upshot of which may be briefly said to be that the Evidences are no proper subject of study at all, but must be relegated to the domain of faith as distinct from fact. The chief stress of the Professor's argument is laid on miracles; and he holds that a miracle is *a priori* and from the nature of the case incredible; it is "connected with faith, but inconceivable to reason." We give a brief passage or two, lest—so astonishing must this position seem—we should be thought to misrepresent Professor Powell:—

Questions of this kind are often perplexed for want of due attention to the laws of human thought and belief, and of due distinction in ideas and terms. The proposition "that an event may be so incredible intrinsically as to set aside any degree of testimony," in no way applies to or affects the *honesty* or *veracity* of that testimony, or the reality of the *impressions* on the minds of the witnesses, so far as it relates to the matter of *sensible fact*, simply. It merely means this: that from the nature of our antecedent convictions, the probability of *some* kind of mistake or deception *somewhere*, though we know not *where*, is greater than the probability of the event really happening in *the way* and from the *causes* assigned.

This of course turns on the general grounds of our antecedent convictions. The question agitated is not that of mere testimony, of its value, or of its failures. It refers to those *antecedent* considerations which must govern our entire view of the subject, and which, being dependent on higher laws of belief, must be paramount to all *attestation*, or rather belong to a province distinct from it. What is alleged is a case of the supernatural; but no testimony can reach to the supernatural; testimony can apply only to apparent sensible facts; testimony can only prove an extraordinary and per-



haps inexplicable occurrence or phenomenon: that it is due to supernatural causes is entirely dependent on the previous belief and assumptions of the parties.

Testimony, after all, is but a second-hand assurance; it is but a blind guide; testimony can avail nothing against reason. The essential question of miracles stands quite apart from any consideration of *testimony*; the question would remain the same, if we had the evidence of our own senses to an alleged miracle, that is, to an extraordinary or inexplicable fact. It is not the *mere fact*, but *the cause* or *explanation* of it, which is the point at issue. The case, indeed, of the *antecedent* argument of miracles is very clear, however little some are inclined to perceive it. In nature and from nature, by science and by reason, we neither have nor can possibly have any evidence of a *Deity working miracles*; for that we must go out of nature and beyond reason. If we could have any such evidence *from nature*, it could only prove extraordinary *natural effects*, which would not be *miracles* in the old theological sense, as isolated, unrelated, and uncaused; whereas, no *physical* fact can be conceived as unique, or without analogy and relation to others, and to the whole system of natural causes.—Essays and Reviews, pp. 106, 107. 141.

Our readers will observe that the supernatural element of Scripture is thus deliberately banished from the region of historical fact. We shrink from pressing a point which has again and again been abundantly demonstrated—that the miraculous is inextricably interwoven with the didactic and the narrative portions of Scripture—and content ourselves with indicating what the Professor thinks of it in his own words. “Miraculous narratives,” he says, “become invested with the character of articles of faith, if they be accepted in a less certain and positive light, or perhaps as involving more or less of the parabolic or mythic character; or at any rate as received in connexion with, and for the sake of, the doctrine inculcated.” He illustrates his



view by comparing "doctrines inculcated through parables," which, however, it is obvious to remark, are not to the purpose, because the parables do not profess to be historical, while the accounts of the miracles in the Bible do. It is impossible to avoid the painful conclusion that Professor Powell regards miracles, prophecy, and all that implies a direct interposition of a supernatural power in human affairs—i. e. the very essence and spirit of the Bible, and the idea itself of a Revelation, as purely mythical; invented, doubtless, for good purposes, but of no more historical authority than the legends which adorn early Roman history. It is not that the Gospel witnesses are suspected of dishonesty; neither are they taxed with simplicity and credulity; neither is their number and the cumulative weight of their testimony pronounced insufficient; but no conceivable amount of evidence ought to make us give credit to a miracle; the thing itself is beyond belief, even if we saw it with our own eyes. This is, indeed, to be a sceptic with a vengeance! Professor Powell turns his back at once upon evidence and argument, and tells you that it is useless to waste words; *laterem lavares*; his mind is made up to reject any and every degree of proof which the case admits of. It would be folly to argue with one who gives it out that he is predetermined not to be convinced; but it is not un instructive to trace out the root and cause of unbelief so obstinate.

Professor Powell justifies the suspicion and dread with which an exclusive pursuit of the physical sciences has so often been by good men regarded. Occupied



in tracing the working of the laws of nature, and finding these laws to be uniform, the devotee of these branches of knowledge is almost irresistibly tempted to project out of himself his own ideas and impressions, and to fancy the whole universe bound over from and to all eternity by the same unchangeableness which marks that portion over which his observations and experiments actually extend. Let it be particularly noticed what Professor Powell's view assumes. It assumes that nature has always and altogether been uniform, and it consequently excludes a miracle as absolutely incredible. But such an assumption can only be made on the ground, either that there is no Being who has power over nature, which is Atheism, or that if there is, He never did and never will exercise it, which is begging the whole question. The argument of the essay against miracles is, in fact, no argument at all; it is a simple prejudice striving to cover its nakedness by borrowing the wherewithal from physical science. Each man thinks most highly of his own trade and profession, and is apt to recommend for every purpose under heaven the material which it is his vocation to manipulate. Just so it is with Professor Powell. There is nothing to him like the laws of nature, and he is so enamoured of them that he will not listen to the idea of God Himself being above them, and proposes with them to overspread the whole field of Scripture and theology. The points he raises are in all essentials the old objections of Spinoza and of Hume, re-dressed in the language of the present day, and more directly based upon physical considerations. Old objections



may often be well met by old answers. The reply of Mr. J. S. Mill, himself no mean authority in physical philosophy, to Hume, is good also for the essay before us:—"A miracle is no contradiction to the laws of cause and effect; it is a new effect supposed to be produced by the introduction of a new cause. Of the adequacy of that cause, if it exist, there can be no doubt; and the only antecedent improbability which can be ascribed to the miracle is the improbability that any such cause had existence in the case. All, therefore, which Hume has made out is that no evidence can be sufficient to prove a miracle to any one who did not previously believe the existence of a Being with supernatural power; or who believed himself to have full proof that the character of the Being whom he recognizes is inconsistent with his having seen fit to interfere on the occasion in question."—System of Logic, Book iii. ch. 25. It is, in fact, the considerations antecedent to testimony, as Professor Powell has more than once remarked, which will eventually decide us to give or withhold credit as to the miracles of Scripture. "Once acknowledge aught higher than nature, a kingdom of God, and men the intended denizens of it," says Dean Trench upon the subject before us, "and the whole argument loses its strength and the force of its conclusions. It is like the fabled giant, unconquerable so long as it is permitted to rest upon the earth out of which it sprung, but easily destroyed when once it is lifted into a higher world."—On the Miracles, pp. 68, 69.

Professor Powell does, indeed, recognize a God in



many passages of his essay. We will not carry out to their full significance the principles he advances, and regard his so doing as an incongruous remnant of antiquated notions cleaving to him, nor as a mere verbal condescension to the prejudices of weaker men. But we must say that, while acknowledging Him, Professor Powell cuts from under himself and us all ground and reason for going one jot beyond a bare acknowledgment. The Deity, it would seem, does not, and will not, even if He can, interfere with the world and its concerns. "Creation," says Professor Powell, is "rejected," and "is only another name for our ignorance of the mode of production." Nature is "pervaded by self-sustaining and self-evolving powers." Miracles—that is, extraordinary interpositions in suspension of these powers—can only be credited on principles which would oblige us to believe, if respectably vouched for, that two and two make five, or that a person had squared the circle. If these things be so, why should men any longer reverence, worship, and serve One who cannot, or will not—or at the very least, does not—reward or punish, save or bless? In fact, Professor Powell has got no further in his theology than the Epicureans of old. His Deity is not, and never has been, disturbed by the laborious business of creating and governing the world.

*"Deos didicit securum agere ævum,  
Nec si quid miri faciat Natura Deos id  
Tristes ex alto cœli demittere tecto."*

For all practical purposes we make bold to say that the teaching of Professor Powell is indistinguishable from Atheism.



We must notice more briefly the two remaining essays of the volume. One, "On the National Church," is contributed by the Rev. H. B. Wilson, and its tone and character will be at once understood by most of those who would be likely to read these essays, if we remind them that Mr. Wilson is the author of an essay on "Schemes of Christian Comprehension," which appeared in the *Oxford Essays for 1857*. Mr. Wilson recommends the principle of "multitudinism" as that on which a national Church should be constructed. It is not easy to convey a distinct idea of what Mr. Wilson intends by "multitudinism," nor is that term made much clearer by remarking that it is opposed to "individualism," on which Mr. Wilson conceives our present Church polity to be too much founded. He is persuaded that the conditions on which the Church of England at present offers the privileges of her communion are unwise and unchristian. She ought not to "require any act which appears to signify 'I think.'" "Speculative doctrines should be left to philosophical schools. A national Church must be concerned with the ethical development of its members." It is "wrong to consider the Church to be founded on the possession of an abstractedly true and supernaturally communicated speculation concerning God, rather than upon the manifestation of a divine life in man." Along with these attacks upon all dogmatic teaching, Mr. Wilson combines a number of remarks and arguments to show how little there really is of a dogmatic character to which our clergy are at present bound. We must extract as a specimen some of his observations on the Sixth



of our Thirty-nine Articles. We can imagine how some of our Evangelical brethren will stand aghast when they see how that, in their estimation, most prominent and weighty Article, evaporates into almost nothing before the ingenious processes applied by Mr. Wilson :—

It has been matter of great boast within the Church of England, in common with other Protestant Churches, that it is founded upon the “Word of God,” a phrase which begs many a question when applied to the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, a phrase which is never applied to them by any of the Scriptural authors, and which, according to Protestant principles, never could be applied to them by any sufficient authority from without. In that which may be considered to be the pivot Article of the Church this expression does not occur, but only “Holy Scripture,” “Canonical Books,” “Old and New Testaments.” It contains no declaration of the Bible being throughout supernaturally suggested, nor any intimation as to which portions of it were owing to a special divine illumination, nor the slightest attempt at defining inspiration, whether mediate or immediate, whether through, or beside, or overruling the natural faculties of the subject of it,—not the least hint of the relation between the divine and human elements in the composition of the Biblical books. Even if the Fathers have usually considered “canonical” as synonymous with “miraculously inspired,” there is nothing to show that their sense of the word must necessarily be applied in our own Sixth Article. The word itself may mean either books ruled and determined by the Church, or regulative books; and the employment of it in the Article hesitates between these two significations. For at one time “Holy Scripture” and canonical books are those books “of whose authority never was any doubt in the Church,” that is, they are “determined” books; and then the other, or uncanonical books, are described as those which “the Church doth not apply to establish any doctrine,” that is, they are not “regulative” books. And if the other principal Churches of the Reformation have gone farther in definition in this respect than our own, that is no reason we should force the silence of our Church into unison with their expressed declarations, but rather that we should rejoice in our comparative freedom.

The Protestant feeling among us has satisfied itself in a blind



way with the anti-Roman declaration, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith," &c., and without reflecting how very much is wisely left open in that Article. For this declaration itself is partly negative and partly positive; as to its negative part it declares that nothing—no clause of creed, no decision of council, no tradition or exposition—is to be required to be believed on peril of salvation, unless it be Scriptural; but it does not lay down that every thing which is contained in Scripture must be believed on the same peril. Or it may be expressed thus:—the Word of God is contained in Scripture, whence it does not follow that it is co-extensive with it. The Church to which we belong does not put that stumbling-block before the feet of her members; it is their own fault if they place it there for themselves, authors of their own offence. Under the terms of the Sixth Article one may accept literally, or allegorically, or as parable, or poetry, or legend, the story of a serpent tempter, of an ass speaking with man's voice, of an arresting of the earth's motion, of a reversal of its motion, of waters standing in a solid heap, of witches, and a variety of apparitions. So, under the terms of the Sixth Article, every one is free in judgment as to the primeval institution of the Sabbath, the universality of the Deluge, the confusion of tongues, the corporeal taking up of Elijah into heaven, the nature of angels, the reality of demoniacal possession, the personality of Satan, and the miraculous particulars of many events. So the dates and authorship of the several books received as canonical are not determined by any authority, nor their relative value and importance.—*Essays and Reviews*, pp. 175—177.

We have no desire to be uncharitable, but we must say that the famous "Tract 90" contained no special pleading if these observations do not. It seems hard, also, when the two ingredients which go to make up Mr. Wilson's essay—the attack upon the whole system of doctrinal tests on the one hand, and the clever casuistry employed to evade their stringency on the other hand—are laid side by side, to acquit Mr. Wilson



of some inconsistency, or to see how he can escape an awkward dilemma. If the exceedingly open teaching which Mr. Wilson exemplifies is permissible under our present doctrinal tests, then surely any further relaxation is most unnecessary; greater liberty would be the extreme of licence; if on the other hand our test system deserves to be abolished or greatly diluted, it can only be on the ground that its operation is unwarrantably exclusive; and it would then seem to follow that Mr. Wilson's mode of explaining these tests away is scarcely right and honest. We quit Mr. Wilson with the remark, which seems pretty obvious, that "multitudinism" is a basis which it would prove impossible for a national Church long to retain. If once tried, it would soon become apparent that the jarring opinions mechanically confined in one society could not comfortably live therein side by side; they would presently come to internecine strife; one or other would prevail; its antagonists would be expelled; and the society, if it did not utterly perish in these intestine commotions, would be reorganized on a narrow, polemical, and intentionally exclusive basis. Like democracy in politics, "multitudinism" in religion would prove near akin to despotism.

Of all the essays bound up in this free-spoken volume, there is none more unpleasing than that of Dr. Rowland Williams on "Bunsen's Biblical Researches." Dr. Williams is apt to assume a tone of self-complacent arrogance, which as ill accords with the solemn subjects under consideration, as it does with good taste itself. He held, we believe, once upon a time, very decided



Church views. If so, he is another unhappy example of the proverb, "*Corruptio optimi pessima*." His own earlier faith might at least have held him from disrespectful treatment of the tenets on which he himself once rested his own hopes of salvation, and on which his brethren for the most part still rest theirs. He ought to have held sacred, as a matter of feeling, if not of faith, much of what he dismisses with contempt, not without insinuation of corrupt motives against his fellows in the ministry. In justification of these strong censures, we will quote a few lines from the last of two very indifferent stanzas of verses in which, at the end of his paper, Dr. Williams exhales his enthusiastic admiration for Bunsen:—

But ah not dead my soul to giant reach,  
That envious Eld's vast interval defied;  
And when those fables strange our hirelings teach,  
I saw by genuine learning cast aside,  
Even like Linnæus kneeling on the sod,  
For faith from falsehood severed, thank I God.

The "fables strange" which Dr. Williams refers to are such as we have been wont to regard as amongst the most sacred elements of our practical and devotional theology, amongst the weightiest evidences of our faith, and the most concerning truths of our creed. A few specimens may be culled up and down the essay at random. We are to hold, it seems—in deference to the Chevalier Bunsen and Dr. Williams his prophet—that the verse, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but He that came down from heaven" (St. John iii. 13), is "intelligible as a free comment near the end of the first century, but has no meaning in our Lord's mouth



at a time when the Ascension had not been heard of;" that the Apocalypse is "a series of poetical visions which represent the outpouring of the vials of wrath upon the city where the Lord was slain;" that the Second Epistle of St. Peter is undoubtedly spurious; that the Pentateuch consists of gradual accretions upon an older and much simpler basis, and is only Mosaic as embodying the fully developed system of Moses; that the famous Shiloh (Genesis xlix. 10) is to be taken in its local sense as the sanctuary where the young Samuel was trained; that the prophecies receive their elucidation in contemporary history, and the directly predictive element in them is being progressively lowered in value; that we must not say that David foretold the exile, because it is mentioned in the Psalms; that Psalm xxxiv. ("A bone of the righteous shall not be broken") is no prophecy of the Crucifixion, though St. John (xix. 36) asserts the direct contrary; that Psalm xxii. ("They pierced My hands and My feet") is altogether misunderstood as applied to the same event; that "the Man of Sorrows" is the "chosen people in opposition to heathen oppressors," or if any individual at all is intended in Isaiah liii. (which is to be regarded as a history), it is no other than the prophet Jeremiah; that Christ is to be recognized as a "moral Saviour of mankind," justification "a verdict of forgiveness upon our repentance," resurrection a "spiritual quickening;" that "the hateful fires of the Vale of Hinnom may serve as images of distracted remorse;" that heaven is "not a place so much as fulfilment of the love of God." Such are a few of the doctrinal suggestions which Dr.



Williams borrows more or less from Bunsen, and recommends to the thoughtful Christian amongst us.

These are the leading ideas and principles, or fair specimens of them at all events, which the five writers on whose contributions to this volume we have ventured specially to remark have thought it right to place before their fellow-Christians and fellow-Churchmen for their information and guidance—for the rectification of their misunderstandings and the improvement of their lives. That they are ideas and principles fraught with dangerous error, and even utterly subversive of revealed religion, few of our readers will doubt. Painful reflections suggest themselves here and there as to how far the writers themselves still retain any real hold upon those truths which are the very characteristics of that religion. While in such men intentional unfairness is not to be thought of, it is impossible sometimes to escape the conviction that they are to the full as credulous and uncandid in their doubts and difficulties as some Christian apologists unquestionably are in their replies. It looks sometimes as if it were almost enough for them if any scientific speculation seems to contradict Scripture: straightway it assumes for them a probability which its intrinsic worth by no means warrants, and which they would assuredly not have discerned in it had it made the other way. We observe, for instance, two or three of them unhesitatingly embracing Mr. Darwin's theory of the development of species, though it is well known that that theory, so far from being as yet substantiated by proper scientific evidence, is held to be unsound by the greatest living



authority on such a point—Professor Owen. However these things may be, it is not hard to discover the one deficiency in their religious system which has led these gentlemen into such unhappy errors. They utterly ignore, we fear they deliberately despise, those functions of the Church as subsidiary to Holy Writ, which are involved when we speak of her as a witness and a keeper. The Church is, in reference to men, the pillar and ground of the truth. It is she who testifies both as to the authority of Scripture, what Scripture is, and what is the doctrine of Scripture on all cardinal points. It is her business to preserve this doctrine from additions, adulterations, and abatements. If her witness is set aside as valueless, and even as prejudicing our views of truth, nothing whatever remains to check the idiosyncrasies of the individual. He may, as the writers before us evidence with melancholy force, find, by one device or another, any thing he pleases in Scripture—or, if he prefers it, nothing definite whatever. We do not greatly fear that opinions such as those advocated in this volume will obtain currency amongst our laity—nor even prevail to any alarming extent amongst our clergy. What positive teaching there is in it is too vague and abstract to be palatable or even intelligible to the common sense of most Englishmen. Its destructive and negative criticism may, however, do some harm. It is far easier, in such matters, to destroy than to build up. Its chief influence will be with minds naturally of a speculative and sceptical turn; and, with them, it will tend to the confirmation of doubts, and the shaking of any faith in the religion of their childhood



which they may still have retained. And thus the Church may lose—we trust and hope only for a time—the allegiance, in heart at least, if not in outward profession, of some few, yet those few not the least able, from amongst those whose best and freshest energies ought to have been dedicated to her.



## ESSAY III.

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*The Life of Edward Irving.* By MRS. OLIPHANT. Two Vols.

EDWARD IRVING has been fortunate in his biographer, if not in his life itself. It would scarce have been possible to commit the task of depicting his career in the vivid colours and brilliant effects to which it seems to aspire to hands more apt and skilful for this particular undertaking than those of Mrs. Oliphant. She has for Irving the sympathy and mutual *rapprochement* which natives of the same country are wont to have; and Scotch people at least as much as any. She was, like him, brought up in that Presbyterian establishment which looks severe and forbidding enough to those who view it from the outside, but which has, nevertheless, oftentimes enlisted the devoted allegiance of the most imaginative. Lastly, Mrs. Oliphant herself has something of the orator in her, and the trait comes out much more strongly in this work than in her novels. Whilst we cannot but see that a good deal of the dignity and significance of the facts she presents to us is less native to them than derived from her own glowing imagination, yet the very tendency she has towards the superlative admirably qualifies her to ap-



preciate and to reproduce in congenial and often very Carlylean style the excellent but enthusiastic and credulous person about whom she writes. It is, indeed, an odd kind of disenchantment which is effected by heating the thoughts well through perusing a few of Mrs. Oliphant's chapters, and then turning to the record of the same transactions in one of the ordinary biographical compilations. To the lady the man she has to deal with was quite a hero. His colossal proportions, his "dark apostolic head of hair"—a sort of unearthliness about him, "his aspect, his height, and presence," all with a female biographer have the fullest justice done them. These physical advantages were well calculated to set off the solemn and impassioned pomp of utterance which characterized Irving's eloquence. "Power and richness, gleams of exquisite beauty, but withal a mysterious and extreme allegorization," is the criticism of Chalmers on the great preacher in the zenith of his fame. Less friendly critics have detected loose and inconsistent reasoning, inflated and redundant phraseology, a vein of metaphor exuberant indeed, but extravagant and fantastic, a dialect neither Scotch nor English, neither ancient nor modern, often sublime and sometimes ridiculous, in those same orations which Mrs. Oliphant seems unable to rate sufficiently highly. Irving unquestionably had, in a high degree, the poetical gift of discerning in commonplace things their grand and mysterious bearings; every thing he approached brightened under the spell of his fervent thoughts and words into the romantic and the sublime. What wonder that such a man, when occu-



pied with things really great—when giving free rein to a faith so ardent as almost to create for itself the objects after which it reached out—overbalanced himself at last, and fell, from the very vehemence and excess of his spiritual gifts, into crazy fanaticism and spiritual ruin? “One of the noblest natures,” says Carlyle on “the Death of Edward Irving” (*Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, vol. v. Essay i.), “a man of antique heroic nature, in questionable modern garniture, which he could not wear!” “It was his own nobleness that forwarded his ruin: the excess of his sociability and sympathy, of his value for the suffrages and sympathies of men.” Anyhow, in spite of his delusions and his trait of vanity and self-opinion, Irving was a man without a mean and selfish thought in him, and one, too, of vast laboriousness, genuineness, and friendliness to all mankind.

Mrs. Oliphant’s work has been now for some time before the public, and has well approved itself. Its literary and ethical characteristics lie plain to view on its surface. It presents with faithfulness, though in somewhat strongly-tinted hues, the personal history of a most noble-minded and unworldly man striving in a very commonplace sphere to transmute the hard prosaic facts of every-day life into something answering to his own expectations, and finally succumbing in the attempt. Such a career is always melancholy, though it is not very uncommon. Fancy and fact often wage war, and ever with the same result. But other and deeper issues arise out of Irving’s words and deeds, on which careful reflection must precede judgment. He



was the founder of a religious sect ;—or, if his followers demur to such statement of what we mean, the inaugurator, at least, of a movement within the pale of Christendom which is giving to this day abundant evidence of vitality and even progress. To review and criticize the motives and events out of which such a movement originated, to estimate its true character and its relations to the Church, form our business ; and it is a business not without its elements of difficulty and complexity.

Irving's life, indeed, does not, regarded from the outside, present any very striking features. Born in 1792, his earlier days gave no remarkable promise, and were solely distinguished by remarkable robustness of physical constitution. He had extraordinary bodily activity and strength, and the usual relish for exercising them. He was sent by thrifty parents from the parish school of Annan to the University of Edinburgh :—

At thirteen, Irving began his studies at the Edinburgh University : such was, and is still, to a great extent, the custom of Scotch Universities—a habit which, like every other educational habit in Scotland, promotes the diffusion of a little learning, and all the practical uses of knowledge, but makes the profounder depths of scholarship almost impossible. It was nearly universal in those days, and no doubt partly originated in the very long course of study demanded by the Church (always so influential in Scotland, and acting upon the habits even of those who are not devoted to her service) from applicants for the ministry. This lengthened process of education cannot be better described than in the words used by Irving himself at a much later period of his life, and used with natural pride, as setting forth what his beloved Church required of her neophytes. "In respect to the ministers," he says, "this is required of them—that they should have studied for four



years in a University all the branches of a classical and philosophical education: and either taken the rank in literature of a Master of Arts, or come out from the University with certificates of their proficiency in the classics, in mathematics, in logic, and in natural and moral philosophy. They are then, and not till then, permitted to enter upon the study of theology, of which the professors are ordained ministers of the Church, chosen to their office. Under separate professors they study theology, Hebrew, and ecclesiastical history, for four years, attending from four to six months in each year. Thus eight years are consumed in study." This is, perhaps, the only excuse which can be made for sending boys, still little more than children, into what ought to be the higher labours of a University. Even beginning at such an age, the full course of study exacted from a youth in training for the Church could not be completed till he had reached his twenty-first year, when all the repeated "trials" of the Presbytery had still to follow before he could enter upon his vocation; an apparent and comprehensible reason, if not excuse, for a custom which, according to the bitter complaints of its victims, turns the University into a kind of superior grammar-school.—Vol. i. pp. 26, 27.

During the latter portion of this eight years he combined his necessary attendance on Divinity Lectures with the teaching of a newly-established school at Haddington; and subsequently kept school also at Kirkcaldy, where he met with and married, after an engagement of eight years, the daughter of the then incumbent, Dr. Martin. Whilst at Kirkcaldy he passed the necessary exercises, and was licensed as a "probationer"—i. e., was authorized to preach when asked to do so, but had no regular pastoral charge. For some years he waited for the "invitation" which should afford him a sphere for the systematic exercise of his ministerial functions, and waited in vain. Another and as it should seem an opposition school was established at Kirkcaldy, by no less a person than Thomas Carlyle;



and Irving threw up an employment which had never been much to his taste, and resumed his divinity studies in Edinburgh. He was on the verge of expatriating himself for missionary work, in despair of a "call" in his native land, when a chance invitation to preach in one of the Edinburgh churches gave him Chalmers for a hearer. Chalmers, just then in the full swing of his remarkable work at St. John's, Glasgow, happened at the time to be in want of an assistant; was struck by Irving's sermon; and eventually engaged his help. At Glasgow, as elsewhere, there seems to have hung round Irving no foreshadow of greatness to come. "Ower muckle gran'nar" was the verdict, as it had been at Kirkcaldy; Irving was not comprehended by his congregation, and carried away with him little, if any thing, more than the personal attachment he well deserved by his devoted labours from house to house amongst the poor. At this time there was abroad amongst the weavers of Glasgow "that sharp touch of starvation which makes men desperate:" there was "want, most pertinacious and maddest of all revolutionaries," "wolfish and seditious plotting, pikes and risings." St. John's was one of the worst districts in the city, both for poverty and disaffection, yet its pauperism was kept down by Chalmers out of the weekly and voluntary offerings of his congregation, and amongst its foulest haunts and most forlorn recesses Irving moved for a time a singular yet a welcome figure:—

When he entered those sombre apartments in the Gallowgate, it was with the salutation, "Peace be to this house," with which he might have entered a Persian palace or desert tent. "It was very



peculiar; a thing that nobody else did," says a simple-minded member of Dr. Chalmers' agency, "it was impossible not to remark it, out of the way as it was; but there was not one of the agency could make an objection to it. It took the people's attention wonderfully." A certain solemn atmosphere entered with that lofty figure, speaking in matchless harmony of voice, its "Peace be to this house." To be prayed for, sometimes edifyingly, sometimes tediously, was not uncommon to the Glasgow poor; but to be blessed was a novelty to them. Perhaps, if the idea had been pursued into the depths of their minds, these Presbyterians, all retaining something of ecclesiastical knowledge, however little religion they might have, would have been disposed to deny the right of any man to assume that priestly power of blessing. Irving, however, did not enter into any discussion of the subject. It was his habitual practice; and the agency, puzzled and a little awed, "could not make an objection to it." He did still more than this. He laid his hands upon the heads of the children, and pronounced with imposing solemnity, the ancient benediction, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee," over each of them—a practice startling to Scotch ears, but acquiesced in involuntarily as natural to the man who, all solitary and individual in picturesque homely grandeur, went to and fro among them.—Vol. i. pp. 111, 112.

We must pass on to the second epoch of his more public life. Irving felt himself in the shade at Glasgow. He was merely Dr. Chalmers' "helper." "The Glasgow people had not had their eyes directed to him; they saw him always in the shade, carrying out another man's ideas, and dominated by another man's superior influence." There are men of high attainments and just expectations who have too often to wear out a round score of years in an analogous position in the Church of England; but for Irving such a lower room was "unnatural." Once more his mind was turned towards missionary work, which had many allurements for his romantic temperament; but in 1821 arrived the



long-desired "call" in the shape of an invitation from the "Caledonian Church," Hatton Garden. Things were indeed at the lowest ebb with this little congregation, which "successive vacancies and discouragements had reduced it to the lowest point at which it could venture to call itself a congregation," and it felt itself unable to enter into the usual bond by which the minister's stipend is "fixed at a certain rate which the office-bearers pledge themselves to maintain." Irving's anxiety to obtain the independent sphere for which he panted overcame this, and other preliminary difficulties, and he entered on his charge "on the second Sabbath of July, 1822," "at the highest pitch of hope and anticipation." Ere long an "exceeding commotion and interest" began to awaken in the sleepy district around the Caledonian Church. In the very next November Irving describes his little chapel as filled to overflowing. But a speech of Canning's in the House of Commons is said to have been the immediate cause of Irving's becoming "fashionable :"—

Sir James Mackintosh had been by some unexpected circumstance led to hear the new preacher, and heard Irving in his prayer describe an unknown family of orphans belonging to the obscure congregation, as now "thrown upon the fatherhood of God." The words seized upon the mind of the philosopher, and he repeated them to Canning, who "started," as Mackintosh relates, and expressing great admiration, made an instant engagement to accompany his friend to the Scotch church on the following Sunday. Shortly after, a discussion took place in the House of Commons, in which the revenues of the Church were referred to, and the necessary mercantile relation between high talent and good *pay* insisted upon. No doubt it suited the statesman's purpose to instance, on the other side of the question, the little Caledonian chapel and its new



preacher. Canning told the house, that so far from universal was this rule, that he himself had lately heard a Scotch minister, trained in one of the most poorly endowed of Churches, and established in one of her outlying dependencies, possessed of no endowment at all, preach the most eloquent sermon that he had ever listened to. The curiosity awakened by this speech is said to have been the first beginning of that invasion of "society" which startled Hatton Garden out of itself.—Vol. i. pp. 158, 159.

For some four years Irving continued one of the leading lions of the great city. The West-end, 1500 strong at least, invaded the secluded and dingy little chapel. His life during this the culminating period of his course is laid before us with much affectionate elaboration of detail by Mrs. Oliphant, and in truth contains very much to enlist our sympathy and respect. He was not, as some great preachers, a man given up entirely to "getting up" for his weekly appearances in the pulpit. On the contrary, he was unwearied in personal labours amongst the members of his congregation and the poor, was always accessible to his friends and countrymen who needed countenance or assistance, and was a centre of hospitality and beneficences not to be counted. There is nothing in the spectacle of Irving's success to mar the satisfaction with which the moral sense regards the rise of "the right man to the right place" by his own merits and fortune. Irving, as soon as his success in London was ascertained, married; and the Diary written by him for the perusal of his wife, during the first considerable period when the chances of life kept them apart, is one of the most pleasing and touching portions of these memoirs. There are few men indeed who could bear to look so stedfastly and



sincerely into their inner selves as Irving has done in this Diary, and record the result so unshrinkingly. Still fewer are those whose self-revelation could be exposed to public gaze, not only with decorum, but even with much of ennobling and purifying influence. This is the first and only journal of the kind that Irving kept. It comes before us as a series of letters written whilst he was in London to his wife, who was after the loss of her firstborn "in the sad affectionate shelter of her father's house,"—"weak and sorrowful, in the faintest hour of a woman's life." "Few men or heroes," exclaims the enthusiastic biographer, in concluding her chapter of extracts, "have been laid in their grave with such a memorial as envelopes the baby name of little Edward; and I think few wives will read this record without envying Isabella Irving that hour of her anguish and consolation." Though this chapter is certainly the cream of the volumes in point of personal interest, the more public issues of Irving's life must absorb our attention, and forbid our attempting extracts from it.

Irving's fame as a preacher demanded larger scope than the narrow limits of the chapel in Hatton Garden, and the congregation removed early in 1827 to a capacious edifice built purposely for it in Regent Square. Here fashion deserted him, and "went her idle way," as Carlyle says, "to gaze on Egyptian crocodiles, Iroquois hunters, or what else there might be." Access to the great preacher was no longer difficult, and therefore was no longer competed for. The new church continued to be well filled, but was never inconveniently crowded, and to the disappointment thus produced



some—his friend Carlyle amongst them—have ascribed the darker shadows and perplexing singularities of his later life. His biographer defends him from this imputation with considerable warmth, and, we are inclined to think, with success. That he had no little love of admiration seems to us evident; nor, in the jumble of inconsistencies which make up every man's personality, is this at all incompatible with that deep and sincere humility which marks his private records. But there is no evidence that Irving was intoxicated by becoming so marvellously yet transiently "the rage." His private life continued unaltered in its unobtrusive laboriousness: "the quaint and simple economics of his household" remained as he had regulated them when he came to London an obscure and almost penniless man: he refused, even on the repeated remonstrances of his elders, to conciliate his fashionable audience by curtailing so much as a minute the inordinate length of his sermons. The influences which led Irving astray were of a subtler and less selfish character than the disenchantment of which we are speaking. At any rate, after the removal to Regent Square, Irving's pathway grew rapidly dark, and sloped downwards. His orthodoxy began now to be questioned. "An idle clergyman called Cole—of whom nobody seems to know any thing but that he suddenly appeared out of darkness at this moment to do his ignoble office"—heard of what appeared to him "a new doctrine." The great preacher "declared the human nature of our Saviour to be identical with all human nature;" or, as Mr. Cole represented it—Mrs. Oliphant says misrepresented it—



taught "the sinfulness of Christ's human nature." Mr. Cole sounded an alarm in a published letter to Irving. There was an outcry; a stir in divers quarters; and Irving devoted two or three discourses in a collection of his sermons then in the press to a specific exposition and vindication of his views on the subject. Into the details of the controversy that arose we need not enter. Irving's statement of the point of it is clear enough. "The point at issue is simply this, whether Christ's flesh had the grace of sinlessness and incorruption from its proper nature or from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; I say the latter." Irving evidently never dreamed of his own teaching on the subject being divergent from that of Catholic Christendom; and when his doctrine was challenged, insisted on it as the only mode in which he could hold to that "wonderful reality of union, which made his Lord not only his Saviour, but his brother and kinsman, the true everlasting Head of the nature He had assumed." When stated, as Irving in his cooler and more judicial mood states it, and coupled with the cautions and the riders he introduces, it seems certainly scarce fair to tax him with holding "the sinfulness or peccability of Christ's human nature." For though he taught that Christ took "manhood fallen," it was only in order "to prove the grace and might of Godhead in redeeming it." Christ's flesh he deemed "in its proper nature mortal and corruptible," but deriving "immortality and incorruption from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost: Christ's existence was not in itself secure and unassailable, but held like a fortress in immaculate purity by



the Godhead within." Those were not days when men were versed in dogmatic theology—Iring himself had never received the scholastic training which it needs to grapple safely with such questions in controversy. Had he been thus qualified, he would hardly have given occasion to the controversy at all. For in truth the perfection of Christ's human sympathy noways involves His having assumed humanity under the conditions of the fall. Sympathy depends on fellowship in nature, not on community in individual attributes and accidents. Now, sin is no integral part of human nature at all, but is merely an accident superinduced on it. As a matter of experience it is the holiest and purest of mankind who manifest the sweetest and the deepest sympathies for their erring and defiled brethren, and usually they do so in proportion to their holiness. Irving's teaching on the whole of this subject—in which he is followed, we believe, by those who in common parlance bear his name—is moreover theologically unsound and pregnant with fatal consequences. We by no means charge such consequences on him; and should be sorry either to brand him with the name of heretic, or to justify in all respects the treatment he met with from his then co-religionists. Yet it is plain, that to insist on our Lord having taken not manhood only, but *fallen* manhood, involves Irving in a dilemma, either alternative of which is deadly error. For if our Lord so took humanity as Irving taught, then either He was tainted with original guilt—a supposition utterly subversive of the faith as regards the Incarnation and the Atonement—or else the concupiscence and lust



which belong to fallen humanity, and which in Him were kept at bay, on Irving's theory, by the immanent might of the Blessed Spirit, have not "the nature of sin," a position verging hard on Pelagianism. Mrs. Oliphant not unnaturally declines to thread the intricacies and the nice turnings of a question like this. She is content to maintain strenuously the uprightness of her hero, and his sincere belief that his faith was both the original and the true one. She warmly denounces the arts which were used to entrap him, and the distortions of his words and sentiments which were resorted to to procure his condemnation. Yet the very tract in which he strove to vindicate his doctrine affords proof positive that his teaching was not a little unsound and dangerous. It is entitled *The Orthodox and Catholic Doctrine of our Lord's Human Nature*; and contains, as Mrs. Oliphant will not deny, "rash and unjustifiable expressions." We can well believe it, though we have not the tract at hand to refer to, for we find Irving quoted as saying in a sermon that our Lord's Body was "devil possessed;" and in a paper in *The Morning Watch*, that "every variety of human wickedness which hath been realized or is possible to be realized was inherent in His humanity."—(Marsden's *Christian Churches and Sects*, vol. ii. p. 58.)

Whilst Irving was thus put on his defence as regards his orthodoxy, a phenomenon rose above the horizon of the religious world which changed the destinies in the Church of himself and those who held with him. Strange tidings reached him from the parish of an intimate friend in Scotland that the gift of tongues had



fallen on a young woman—Mary Campbell—soon followed up by gifts of healing exhibiting themselves in another neighbouring household. To Irving's ears these wonders came with all the recommendation and verisimilitude that news long expected carries with it. Some years previously he had taken up with characteristic warmth and glow of imagination the captivating yet bewildering subject of unfulfilled prophecy; had revelled both in meditation and discourse in interpretations of the Books of Daniel and of the Revelation; and had persuaded himself and his circle of admirers that the Second Advent of Christ and the Millennium were close at hand. He gathered from Scripture that this august epoch was to be ushered in by a new epiphany of the miraculous power of God. Amidst such exciting anticipations, "the future," as Mrs. Oliphant says, "palpitated before the earnest leader and his anxious followers." These tendencies received stimulus and direction from Irving's ever-growing intimacy with Henry Drummond, who invited from time to time a band of students of Prophecy to his seat, Albury, where for some days they shut themselves up to pray, meditate, and discuss the prospects of the Church of the Future as revealed to the faithful in Scripture. The first gathering of the kind seems to us, who know the subsequent history of the individuals who composed it, not a little singular. It consisted of some twenty men, under the "moderation" of the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, then incumbent of the parish. It contained, besides Irving and Drummond, Joseph Wolff and Mr. Dods-worth! Before the appearance of the "gifts" in 1831,



the divergences which carried these men in so many different directions had set in, but from amongst them Irving and Drummond were pursuing side by side the path which led them to the foundation of a new sect. They and their friends supported a well-appointed Quarterly, *The Morning Watch*, which, besides taking up the vindication of Irving's doctrine respecting our Lord's Humanity, discussed Prophecy in its various bearings, and the conditions, uses, &c., of miracles. Soon these enthusiasts persuaded themselves that miracles must be regarded not so much as attestations of the Gospel as parts of it. They conceived that the power of working signs and wonders, if not necessarily inherent in a saving faith, is at least an attribute of it in its higher and sublimer walks, and within the reach of all who receive not the grace of God in vain. On such a coterie the intelligence from Scotland fell like the spark on the ready-laid train of gunpowder. Immediately the church in Regent Square was vehemently agitated; they had been holding special meetings to intercede for the General Assembly, which had then at its bar in Edinburgh some of Irving's friends and partners in theological opinion, under charge of heresy: they now continued these meetings in the early morning,—the origin of the early Matins of the "Catholic Apostolic Church,"—and directed their supplications to interests more immediately their own. "It was for the outpouring of the Spirit that they now resolved to ask; for the bestowal of those miraculous gifts of which news came without ceasing from Scotland, which were daily hoped for with gradually increasing in-



tensity amongst themselves, and which, if once revealed, they did not doubt would be to the establishing of a mighty influence in the great city which surged and groaned around them, a perpetual battle-ground of human passion." Such enthusiastic petitioners were not likely to take long denial. "Among those who prayed every morning for the visible manifestation of God and His wonderful works amongst themselves, there was one at least so intent upon the petition he urged, and so sure that what he asked was in conformity to the will of God, that his anxious gaze had almost power to create upon the horizon the light he looked for." In July, 1831, Irving was accordingly enabled to announce, "Two of my flock have received the gift of tongues and prophecy." He was much too prepossessed to be an impartial trier of spirits. His soul was naturally akin to the wondrous, and was far indeed from being armed with that ever-watchful distrust of every thing pretending to be above nature which characterizes the intellect of this generation. A miracle to Irving was always rather the fulfilment of an antecedent probability than an event against which there necessarily lay the heaviest presumptions. It was to him a merciful unveiling of that Divine energy on which his thoughts ever rested as the true cause of all things to God's people and God's Church. Now, when it was his confident and cherished hope to see with his own eyes his Saviour on the Millennial Throne, there was "a certain magnificent probability in the flood of Divine utterance and action for which he prayed and waited." The agreement of more than two or three in that petition



had likewise to his realizing faith made God Himself responsible for the fulfilment of His own promise to united prayer. Yet Irving forced himself to impose on those who thus brought him a visible answer to his daring yet confident requests a probation which he considered a severe one; and "proceeded with a care and caution scarcely to be expected of him." After some weeks' suspense, however, Irving was satisfied, proclaimed his conviction from the pulpit, and gave permission for the exercise of those gifts in the congregation, which he had convinced himself were of God, and which therefore he dared no longer restrain. There are those still living who will remember something of the scenes which ensued in the chapel in Regent Square, and the excitement, the stir, the ridicule, and even the tumults, which these "manifestations," growing week by week in frequency and energy, caused. The trustees of the building were obliged at last, and very reluctantly, to interfere. They appealed in due course to "the Presbytery of London," and this body eventually closed the chapel against Irving on the ground that he had, contrary to the terms of the trust-deed, and to ecclesiastical order, permitted unauthorized persons to speak in the congregation. Mrs. Oliphant, as usual, is angry at the way in which Irving was dealt with. She deems that the Presbyters ought not to have closed the doors of his chapel against him without satisfying themselves that the manifestations objected to by the trustees were not in fact of the supernatural character which they claimed to be. Into no such inquiry did these wary Scotchmen venture. They



unanimously “decerned” that the proceedings authorized by Irving were in contravention of the discipline of their Church, and of the provisions of the trust-deed under which the building was held, and removed Irving from the ministry he occupied. No one who looks at the matter impartially can reasonably blame either their conclusion or their mode of reaching it. It is scarcely possible to conceive any thing more alien from the decorous and cold usages of Scotch national religionism than the scenes which had been taking place for weeks in Irving’s congregation, and which the trustees had tried in vain by private remonstrances to check.

Thus Irving, and with him the bulk of his congregation, were expelled from the chapel built for their use, and with it they practically forsook also the religious denomination to which it belonged. Eventually, after a season of open-air preachings, and a temporary occupation of a large room in Gray’s-inn-road, formerly used as a lecture-room by Robert Owen (so strange are the vicissitudes of rooms as of other human belongings!), the great preacher and his adherents found a more permanent asylum in premises in Newman-street. The “utterances” of course became a more and more prominent feature in the nascent community; which by rapid degrees expanded into a theocratical institution, professing to derive all its discipline and regulations direct from God. Such an immediate transmission of the Divine Will naturally superseded the ordinary ecclesiastical machinery which Irving and his friends had hitherto regarded as the appointment of the Founder of the Church. It was declared “in the



power" that the Church no longer retained the privilege of ordaining, and that thenceforward all spiritual offices must be filled by the gifted, or those called through the gifted by the Spirit of God. Irving was about this time deposed from his functions in the Kirk by the Presbytery of his native place, which had according to Presbyterian rule ordained him; and when he returned in grief and indignation to London, to the little society which he himself had originated and bound together, he was met by an interdict from one of his own prophets, "forbidding him to exercise any priestly function, to administer sacraments, or to assume any thing out of the province of a deacon, the lowest office in the newly-formed Church." For Irving himself never laid claim to any of those supernatural powers which he believed to be in such vigorous activity about him; and showed thereby his sincerity, as well as his humility and good sense. And so "the prophets spoke, and the elders ruled, but in the midst Irving sat silent, listening wistfully, if perhaps the voice from heaven might come to restore him to that office which was the vocation of his life." Never did any the faintest irradiation reach Irving of that mystic light which he had persuaded himself was vouchsafed so abundantly to others, and which he had come to regard as the most precious token of acceptance with God. Yet at last, while he sat in the lowest place, and waited with humbleness, the utterance once more called the forlorn but dauntless warrior to take up his arms, and he received ordination "at the apostolic hands of Mr. Cardale" as "angel or chief pastor of the flock



assembled in Newman-street." Whether these multiplied trials and disappointments broke his heart, or whether his devoted labours and his manifold domestic afflictions exhausted his constitution, it was not long after his re-ordination before his waning strength and wasted look gave sign that his life was ebbing from him. Amongst the delusions which he cherished to the very last was one that God would assuredly restore him to health. He held that the power of disease arises from sin, and that it is consequently the standing of God's redeemed people to bid defiance to its ravages:—

Dr. Rainy, who attended him, informed me of various particulars in these last days: but indeed, so touched with tears, after thirty years' interval, was even the physician's voice, and so vivid the presentment of that noble, wasted figure, stretched in utter weakness, but utter faith, waiting for the moment when God, out of visible dying, should bring life and strength, that I cannot venture to record with any distinctness those heart-breaking details. By times, when on the very verge of the grave, a caprice of sudden strength seized the patient; he sighed for "God's air" and the outdoor freshness which he thought would restore him. He assured the compassionate spectator, whose skilled eyes saw the golden chords of life melting asunder, how well he knew that he was to all appearance dying, yet how certainly he was convinced that God yet meant to raise him: and again, and yet again, commended "the work of the Holy Ghost" to all faith and reverence; adding, with pathetic humility, that of these gifts he himself had never been "found worthy."

Once in this wonderful monologue he was heard murmuring to himself sonorous syllables of some unknown tongue. Listening to those mysterious sounds, Dr. Martin found them to be the Hebrew measures of the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd," into the latter verses of which the dying voice swelled as the watcher took up and echoed the wonderful strain, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." As the current of life grew feebler and feebler, a last



debate seemed to rise in that soul which was now hidden with God. They heard him murmuring to himself in inarticulate argument, confusedly struggling in his weakness to account for this visible death which at last his human faculties could no longer refuse to believe in—perhaps touched with ineffable trouble that his Master had seemed to fail of His word and promise. At last that self-argument came to a sublime conclusion in a trust more strong than life or death. As the gloomy December Sunday sank into the night shadows, his last audible words on earth fell from his pale lips. The last thing like a sentence we could make out was, “If I die, I die unto the Lord. Amen.”—Vol. ii. pp. 399—402.

For Irving personally his biographer has unquestionably done much. She has cleared his memory from many a cloud of misapprehension and censure of levity. She has brought out his noble personality, “with his imperfections breaking tenderly into his natural grandeur,” in a way that exhibits rare skill, exquisite pathos, and never-failing sympathy. If she has done her hero not justice only, but something more, that is a fault on the right side; which too should have ready pardon, for it is out of the feelings which prompt this exuberant appreciation that the vividness and reality of the narrative grow. Not the least proof that Irving was no ordinary man is in truth to be seen in the fascination he exercised over those who came within reach of his personal influence. We, to whom such influence can only be known as matter of hearsay, may more readily make allowance for the warm tones of personal affection than dispense with a biography like this, which could only be written as a labour of love. The same apology, supported by a further one which is needed by Mrs. Oliphant, as by all writers from the other side of Tweed, for the national propensity to



grandiloquence, must serve also to excuse the somewhat inflated and not always correct style in which these memoirs are written. We demur to the titles of "Martyr and Saint," with which Mrs. Oliphant crowns Irving. But we are grateful to her for having given us a most eloquent and moving portraiture of a man whose life was unquestionably pitched in a high key, and who was unsparingly consistent in striving after his ideal by thought, word, and deed.

There is something in the life of Irving as a whole very tragic in effect. To have been so lofty in aspiration, so pure in life, so gifted in intellect, and yet to have been the victim of one of the most miserable illusions to which a man ever sacrificed himself, is a spectacle to inspire both pity and fear. Here is a man faithful to death, and humble too, given over to "strong delusion that he should believe a lie." Such a fact at its first presentment gives a shock to the moral sense. That Irving had indeed his faults and his weaknesses is but to say that he was human; that the appalling mistakes which desolated his later life had their vantage-ground in the defective elements in his character is obvious. Yet where there was so much that was noble and good it seems as if life had dealt hardly with him, and his lot were a cruel one. From his life, as from that of so many other good men, we may draw in about equal measure example and warning. What more splendid than that divine faith which carried him through the waste imbroglio of falsehood and disappointment to an end so peaceful? What more impressive in the caution it gives than the spectacle of



one so able and so good so palpably misled in the greatest matters that the homeliest understanding could not avoid convicting him? The Gospel has no more effective weapons than its fundamental truths as set forth in the Creeds, and no more certain and peculiar fruits than righteousness and peace. Irving did ill to postpone these things to unfulfilled prophecy and miraculous signs. Very significant is what is told of him just before he first went to London. He is spoken of as "not patient of the usual orthodoxy." "You are content to go back and forward like this boat," he is reported to have said to a party of friends on the waters of the Gairloch, "but as for me I hope yet to go deep into the ocean of truth." The genius which thus disdains "the usual orthodoxy" is at least as dangerous to its possessor and the Church as it is rare. A minister of the Gospel needs very especially sobriety of judgment and a chastened self-distrust.

It may be well to add a few words on the "splendid mischief" which marred Irving's career—especially as there are not a few amongst our poor people who share with more or less distinctness the error of Irving, that miracles are a proper portion of the Gospel dispensation. The line which divides the spurious from the genuine miracle is, speaking generally, clear enough. An extraordinary performance—e.g., a cure or an utterance with tongues—is worthless for evidential purposes, except it be absolutely inexplicable on any other hypothesis than the presence of superhuman agency. We must in all reason and reverence attribute an act to the immediate interposition of God only in the last resort. If a dead



man be restored to life, or a disease, plainly organic, be suddenly cured, and no less, we will admit, if men all at once speak real languages which they have never learned, such events are no doubt miraculous. All such wonder works, however, when adduced as testimony to the truth of a doctrine or the authority of a Church, involve two questions which should always be kept distinct—(1) whether the event ever happened at all; (2) whether the cause of it was Divine interference. The one is a question of fact, the other of argument; and the answers to the two may in the same case be quite different. Now, as regards the Irvingite miracles, and we might add those of the Wesleyans and other modern fanatics, and many of those of the Romanists, *the facts* need not be challenged at all, but the inferences can by no means be allowed. “The tongues” have not yet been found correspondent with any language spoken on the globe;—some of the most gifted prophets amongst them (e.g., Mr. Robert Baxter and Mary Campbell) have recanted, and confessed that they simply uttered hysterical incoherences. The cures are remarkable, but one and all admit of explanation as being of functional as distinct from organic diseases. The most singular case was that of Miss Fancourt, who was healed through the instrumentality of one of the Evangelists. This lady, who was a religious woman, and of a religious family, had been ill of a spine disease for eight years, and during the last two was entirely confined to her couch. We extract a portion of her narrative from Mrs. Oliphant’s Appendix:—

After asking some questions respecting the disease, he added, “It



is melancholy to see a person so constantly confined." I answered, "It is sent in mercy." "Do you think so? Do you think the same mercy could restore you?" God gave me faith, and I answered, "Yes." "Do you believe Jesus could heal, as in old times?" "Yes." "Do you believe it is only unbelief that prevents it?" "Yes." "Do you believe Jesus could heal you at this very time?" "Yes." (Between these questions he was evidently engaged in prayer.) "Then," he added, "get up and walk to your family." He then had hold of my hands. He prayed to God to glorify the name of Jesus. I rose from my couch quite strong. God took away all my pains, and we walked downstairs. Dear Mr. G. prayed most fervently, Lord, have mercy upon us! Christ, have mercy upon us! Having been down a short time, finding my handkerchief left on the couch, taking the candle, I fetched it. The next day I walked more than a quarter of a mile, and on Sunday from the Episcopal Jews' Chapel, a distance of one mile and a quarter. Up to this time God continues to strengthen me, and I am perfectly well.

Now, as regards this lady, the fact of whose healing as described by herself admits of no question, there was from the first a difference of medical opinion as to whether her malady had ever at any time been any thing more than a passive form of nervous ailment; and further, whether, if it ever were organic, it had not been subdued, and was only awaiting one of those sudden impulses which in complaints of this sort often emancipate the patient at once and for all. Every word of Miss Fancourt's statement may be allowed, yet there will appear notwithstanding nothing at all supernatural in the transaction from first to last. It is well within the range of natural and ascertained laws, though laws perhaps not of every-day observation. Sudden transports of the feelings have often restored the use of weakened and even disabled limbs, put to flight serious



and even mortal diseases, and unloosened the deadening grasp of palsy. Amongst such moral engines unfaltering faith is doubtless the most powerful; but that it is not so because of its religious character, and that its efficacy affords in itself no trustworthy ground for drawing religious inferences, is evident enough from this fact—that terror, joy, and anger have occasionally wrought miracles equally great. The influence of imagination in the cure of diseases may perhaps be measured by its influence in causing them: and its power both ways is illustrated in medical works by countless instances. The convulsionnaires of the eighteenth century, the cures of Valentine Graterakes in the days of the Commonwealth, and of Prince Hohenlohe some forty years ago; and the whole history of Animal Magnetism, may be referred to as examples of what we mean. We may safely admit that many of the miracles of the middle ages occurred as a matter of fact; we are not prepared to denounce as impostors all the pilgrims who have left crutches and fac-similes of diseased limbs at Holywell, and other such famous fountains; we could only reject the narratives of the cures of scrofulous diseases by the touch of many of our Kings and Queens on principles which would go hard against all that is received as the history of those times. All we doubt about is the agency to which the healing work ought to be credited. The distinction between such marvels and those of the New Testament is obvious. It may not be practicable to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the natural and the supernatural; but it is easy to see that our Saviour's cures,



or the Pentecostal tongues, as obviously fall beyond the utmost assignable range of all the moral agencies in question, as the Irvingite tongues and cures fall within that range. Had we, again, no other marvels wrought by our Saviour than cures of diseases, the evidential momentum of His miracles would be less than it is. Taken in conjunction with the raising of the dead, the turning water into wine, the walking on the sea, &c., the testimony of Christ's wonder works of healing is conclusive; and the miracles of the New Testament must be taken as a whole, standing or falling together.

Like the Wesleyans, the Irvingites rest their claim to miraculous gifts on the promises made to prayer—"Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." *Ergo*, the promise of God is recorded to bestow whatsoever thing the sincere believer thinks fit to ask. And so the fanatic claims at his pleasure to pawn the word and to wield the working of omniscience and omnipotence! God would be unfaithful did He fail to render a direct and visible answer in kind to his demand for his real or fancied necessities! To reason with such frenzy would be idle. The instances of our Lord, who prayed for that which it was not the Father's will to grant, and the similar instance of St. Paul, may be suggested. The vital truth should be insisted on that we know not what nor how to pray, as we ought; and that the very essence of accepted prayer lies in perfect resignation.

Out of the cardinal error that miraculous gifts are the indefeasible inheritance of the Christian Church has been evolved the whole system of Irvingism, which



has seemingly established itself as one of the numerous denominations amongst us. Without directly excommunicating either our Church or his own as apostate, Irving and his followers took a line which comes round eventually to pretty much the same result. They argue that gifts and miracles had almost or altogether disappeared from Christendom because of the faithlessness and the coldness of Christians. Irving again and again records, in various terms, his conviction that there had been no complete and effective declaration of religious truth to men—in these islands at least—for centuries; as he says once, if not oftener, since the first three centuries. To restore the Church to her first glories, to give her back to her early nearness to her Divine Head, when once more she should be crowned by the sensible and wonder-working tokens of Divine inhabitation, is the mission which the Irvingite community claims. It has no standard of faith other than the Three Creeds, nor will it accept for itself the name and position of a separatist body. Rather does it assert itself as the true and living centre round which the scattered bands of Christ's Church militant must unite, and repudiate accordingly all other names than that of "Catholic Apostolic Church." It meets in separate congregations, and uses its peculiar ordinances of worship, but only because it has received special commands from Heaven so to do. It has kinds of ministers not found in other Christian Churches of our latter days—Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, &c.; but looks upon these, which are found in the first century, as intended for abiding orders in the Church; fallen, indeed, into



desuetude from the deadness and lack of faith in the days gone by, but now given back by the good Spirit of God, and, indeed, as necessary to prepare and perfect the Church for the impending advent of her Lord. With such a manifold ministry, and with oracles within their pale perpetually occupied in expanding to perfection their ritual, the Irvingite community has little indeed about it now which reminds one of its Presbyterian parentage. It possesses, in truth, ceremonies and offices of worship which for complexity, richness, and elaborateness of symbolism, are unmatched by those of any Reformed Church.

Being such in outward guise, and such in spiritual pretensions, the rise and unquestionable success of this form of religionism is a phenomenon well worthy of the attention of Churchmen. Its adherents at first were chiefly men of wealth and station;—a noteworthy fact when we remark that each member of this Church is under a sacred, and, we believe, a well-kept, obligation to devote a tenth part of his substance to its purposes. Of late, however, it has received considerable accessions from amongst the poorer classes; and in our large towns is at present probably the most progressive of the sects. At the Census of 1851 it numbered 6000 communicants; but this number must have been very largely increased since that date. It has also congregations in Germany and the United States. We need not stay to point out the unsound nature of its ecclesiastical foundations. A Christian society, which carries on its very face an implied allegation that the gates of hell have in fact prevailed against Christ's



Church for some fifteen hundred years, stands as it were self-condemned before the Word of God. Yet its success, though it will no doubt be transient as that of a sect always has been and always will be, is very significant; especially when viewed in connexion with the fact that other sects also, even those which by origin and instinct most revolt from the process, are fain, in order to hold their ground at all, to veneer themselves with an outer surface of ecclesiasticism. The only way for the Dissenting interest to resist a little longer the rising Church feeling of our larger towns is to make Dissent as little unlike the Church as possible. Such a state of things is both cheering and instructive. Instructive because it shows us that a fearless and thorough development of our Church's system both of ritual and doctrine is now at last attractive to our people as well as obligatory on ourselves; cheering because one cannot doubt that Englishmen, when the genuine and precious article is offered them, will not be put off in preference to it either with the singular electroplating of Churchmanship wherewith the Baptist, the Independent, or the Socinian now-a-days essays to disguise his true self; nor with the false metal, alloyed throughout, though highly polished and profusely decorated, which the Irvingite proffers to beguile him.



## ESSAY IV.

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*Sunday : its Origin, History, and Present Obligation. The Bampton Lectures for 1860. By J. A. HESSEY, D.C.L.*

DID any of our clerical readers ever hear "the Sunday question" discussed at a Ruridecanal Meeting? If not, let us advise them to propose the subject in the form Dr. Hessey has adopted as the title of the Bampton Lectures of 1860, for the next conference of the kind which they expect to attend. They will then hear perhaps twenty parish priests delivering themselves pretty unanimously as to *the fact* of the obligation, and not differing materially as to *mode* of observance, but holding, respecting the principles on which both obligation and observance should be rested, as many different shades of views as there are individuals. Dr. Hessey truly remarks that "the clergy are much divided as to the main points treated of in these lectures;" and that "great confusion of thought exists on this deeply important subject." He has therefore done well to select his theme as he has done. If it is for any one it is for a Bampton Lecturer *tantas componere lites*. Without being able to congratulate Dr. Hessey on a decided success, we may safely praise the book as one



of great and general interest, and a not unworthy successor to the valuable lectures of Mr. Rawlinson in 1859—themselves coming off not badly from a contrast so trying as that naturally suggested by their taking up those of Professor Mansel in 1858. “The Bampton,” in fact, would seem to have undergone a revival; and are latterly become an appreciable addition to the literary total of each season.

Dr. Hessey is well known as an eloquent preacher. His command of language is well used in the Lectures before us to warm and quicken the otherwise somewhat tedious historical and antiquarian researches into which his subject leads him. We notice indeed occasionally a free and easy style of expression which must have sounded, we think, somewhat oddly in the venerable rostrum of St. Mary’s, and before an audience so peculiarly decorous and dignified. Dr. Hessey has, however, conducted his delicate and difficult undertaking with rare learning and candour throughout. As a collection of materials bearing upon Sunday, its history, literature, antiquities, &c., the Bampton Lectures of 1860 stand altogether without a rival; indeed, without a second. The writer tells us that “he has had the subject before him for years, and has been in the habit of noting down whatever he found bearing upon it in the course of his reading. His view was formed and his materials were accumulated, for the most part, before his name was proposed to the electors.” The authorities and quotations are enormous in number, and heterogeneous in character; and are judiciously thrown together in an Appendix, so as to leave the



main current of the argument unimpeded. This collection—comprising citations from pretty nearly every writer of note who has dealt with the subject, and coming down even to illustrations from the newspapers of our own day, will hardly be dispensed with by future students in this field; and its usefulness would be greatly increased by the addition of a copious index. The book, indeed, is destitute altogether both of this and also of an adequate table of contents: in future editions such defects should be remedied.

Dr. Hessey opens his subject by reciting the leading opinions upon it which have struggled for mastery in England since the Reformation. These opinions may be counted as six; but they prove eventually reducible to two. “The no-Sabbath, or perpetual Sabbath, opinion” (i. e., that of those who maintain that to a Christian every day is a Sabbath, and no one day more so than another), “and that which advocates a Saturday Sabbath, may be omitted from our estimate altogether.” The third and fourth views—differing in degree rather than in kind—may be called “the Sabbatarian set of opinions;” and the fifth and sixth, in like manner, jointly receive the name of “Dominical.” The argument held by the advocates of these antagonistic theories is thus stated for them by Dr. Hessey:—

These Sabbatarians (say the Dominicals) would introduce Judaism into the Christian Church, revive ordinances which have long since passed away, impose upon consciences burdens which the Jews found too heavy to be borne, call acts by the name of sins which God has not so called; in fact, against the advice of St. Paul, submit “to be judged in respect of the Sabbath days.” We find fault with the assumption (unheard of in the ancient Church) that the Fourth Com-



mandment is the ground of the observance of Sunday ; with the logic which says, because God commanded aforetime that the seventh day should be kept holy by Jews, therefore the first day is to be kept holy by Christians now ; and, as practical men, we find fault with the *tristesse* and rigour which the Sabbatarian theory of Sunday would introduce into the cheerful dispensation of Christianity. Scotland is an instance in point.

These Dominicals (thus argue the Sabbatarians on the other hand) evidently cast a slur on the volume of the Old Testament ; evidently set at nought the word of God uttered at the Creation and solemnly repeated at the giving of the Decalogue ; evidently use dishonestly a prayer which they breathe every time they publicly hear the Fourth Commandment ; evidently substitute for a Divine foundation of Sunday, one of mere human invention, the authority of the Church. Besides, as practical men, we fear that if we do not adopt and urge for the Lord's Day the divine sanctions and regulations with which Scripture has invested and ordered the seventh day, men will gradually diminish their reverence for it, and eventually either throw off all restraint upon it, or, a few perfunctory services got through, spend the remainder of it, if not in licentiousness, at least in frivolity. The Continent may furnish a warning in this matter.—Pp. 16—18.

In discussing these opinions, Dr. Hessey's plan is first to indicate the conclusions to which his investigations have led him. In order to this, he states at the outset a number of positions which he is prepared to maintain, and which the subsequent lectures are devoted to substantiate and illustrate. We will follow this method, and state the leading features of the result at which Dr. Hessey arrives :—

That the Lord's Day (a festival on the first day in each week in memory of our Lord's Resurrection) is of Divine institution and peculiarly Christian in its character, as being indicated in the New Testament, and having been acknowledged and observed by the Apostles and their immediate followers as distinct from the Sabbath (or Jewish festival on the seventh day in each week), the obligation



to observe which is denied, both expressly and by implication, in the New Testament.

That in the two centuries after the death of St. John the Lord's Day was never confounded with the Sabbath, but carefully distinguished from it, as an institution under the law of liberty, as observed on a different day and with different feelings; and moreover, that, as a matter of fact, it was exempt from the severity of the provisions which had been the characteristic of the Sabbath, in theory, or in practice, or in both.—Pp. 19, 20.

It will be observed here—as is more fully apparent in the sequel—that the Lord's Day is dissociated entirely from the Jewish Sabbath; that the ground for its observance is not laid in the Fourth Commandment; and that a distinct and independent footing is sought for it. The Lord's Day may, according to Dr. Hessey, be truly said to be of Divine institution; but then that expression must be limited to signify no more than that its observance has the sanction of the divinely-inspired Apostles: "It is as to its origin much on a par with Confirmation." Again, the Lord's Day may be said to be of ecclesiastical institution; but that title belongs to it in a "high and peculiar sense;" for "the *Ecclesia* and its authorities at that time included inspired men, who, in reference to what they practised as regulators of the Church and what they ordained, were unable to err." Such is an outline of the view Dr. Hessey takes in these able Lectures. His treatment of Sunday, in all its bearings, is very elaborate and thorough; and he deals fairly and justly with the several schools of opinion which come under his review; yet we fear that he has effected little towards a settlement of the controversy, except it be in the way of furnishing weapons



and vantage-ground to the combatants, and this he does to both sides with much impartiality. His theory is neither one thing nor another, and will satisfy neither "Sabbatarians" nor "Dominicals." Too high for the latter, it by no means comes up to the standard of orthodoxy for which the former pertinaciously stickle. Both sides, as is usual in such cases, will be more inclined to censure Dr. Hessey for what he denies than to thank him for what he allows them; and the Bampton Lectures for 1860 have accordingly received some severe criticism. We must add a small contribution thereto by alleging several particulars in which we think Dr. Hessey's views respecting Sunday, its origin and obligation, are more or less defective and unsatisfactory.

Dr. Hessey, as we have seen, severs our Lord's Day from the Sabbath of the Jews, holding that the latter was formally abrogated by the Gospel, and that the former, though a Divine ordinance in a special and limited sense, is no ways connected with it, unless it be in the way of suggestion merely. We need not cite the passages from Romans, Colossians, &c., which are brought forward in proof that the Sabbath is done away with for Christians; they are familiar to all who have considered the question. Neither will our space permit us to discuss the Patristic authorities on which Dr. Hessey relies for his assertion that the Sunday was distinguished by the Church in the earliest times and downwards, from the Sabbath and all belonging to it. The witness of the early Church on this point we interpret in a different sense from that which suggests itself



to Dr. Hessey, as will be seen by and by, and we are far from being convinced by him that the Sunday has nothing, or next to nothing, to do with the Sabbath and the Fourth Commandment. Ultimately the question resolves itself into this—Is the religious observance of one day in the week of positive or of moral obligation? A positive precept is, of course, one the reason of which we cannot see, but which binds us because imposed by competent authority: a moral precept is one for which we do see good and sufficient reasons. *Primâ facie*, we imagine, most persons would call the Fourth Commandment a moral one, merely because it is found in “the commandments called moral.” Dr. Hessey also allows that the commandment contains “a moral element,” inasmuch as our duty to worship God involves for such creatures as we are fixed times and seasons for so doing. It appears to us that this admission, with one or two obvious corollaries, implies more than Dr. Hessey would be inclined to allow. It renders a reason for the imposition of the commandment, and, a captious person might say, brings it thereby at once within the category of moral. But must the reason which is to be assigned before any precept can be accounted moral and consequently of universal obligation, be necessarily one which is obvious and patent, striking the mind at once when the subject-matter of the precept is thought upon: or does it suffice (as we rather think,—and believe Dr. Hessey would also) that experience and reflection elicit it? We grant that no reason could be discovered by man’s unaided understanding why the seventh rather than any other day of the



week should be selected as holy, and so much of the Fourth Commandment we, of course, give up as positive and ceremonial. But is this the essence of the commandment? Is it not rather accidental to it, just as is the promise annexed to the commandment following? The substance surely is not only that a *fixed* portion of our time should be more especially dedicated to God, which Dr. Hessey allows to be "a moral element," but also *that that portion should be a seventh*. For such an arrangement weighty reasons are not wanting. Experience seems to attest that a holy rest during so much of our days is eminently accommodated to creatures constituted as we are, and in the highest degree expedient both for soul and body, not to say necessary for their welfare. Breaches of this commandment bring their penalty in the natural course of things, and quite as uniformly and certainly as is the case with the other nine. Conscience is found to accredit the obligation, and to lift up its voice against the violation of it. It would seem from all this, and much more that might be added, that the Fourth Commandment not only contains "a moral element," but is in substance moral. True, as it stands in the Decalogue, it is surrounded with Jewish sanctions, conditions, and circumstances. With the disannulling of the Jewish dispensation, these appendages drop off from it and from the other nine. Yet it, with the rest of the Decalogue, remains in substance binding by its intrinsic force and virtue, nor can we discover any fundamental distinction which can mark it off from the other precepts of the same supreme code.



It must be to a Churchman a strong confirmation of this argument that our Church, after the reading out of the Fourth Commandment, puts into our mouths the same prayer with which she follows up the others, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" and in the general deprecation after the Tenth Commandment, again beseeches God "to write all these His laws in our hearts." Dr. Hessey's treatment of this weighty fact appears to us vague and elusive. It is right he should make his own statement, and the gist of it appears in the following:—

Do what we will, place the Lord's Day on whatever grounds we please, (unless we adopt the fiction that the first day of the week was the actual seventh from the Creation,) we must spiritualize it in some way or other as we utter the prayer about keeping it. The Sabbatarian spiritualizes it in his peculiar way—i. e. by saying actually of the First Day, what was originally said of the Seventh Day. The man who holds the purely ecclesiastical theory spiritualizes it in his way, or rather in a variety of ways which will be mentioned presently. He then does no strange thing, but Christianizes the oldness of the letter, who, when he hears the Fourth Commandment rehearsed in his ears, thinks of the day hallowed by Christ's Resurrection, the birthday of the world to life and immortality, and desiring grace to observe it worthily, says, "Lord, have mercy upon me, and incline my heart to use rightly Thine own day, the Lord's Day."—P. 204.

We might argue that this as it stands is hardly consistent with the dissociation of the Lord's Day and the Sabbath, for which Dr. Hessey elsewhere contends. But, passing by this point, we think Dr. Hessey entirely fails to account for the expressions, "this law," "all these Thy laws," above referred to: and unless our Church intended to procure the religious observance



of Sunday on the part of her members by a kind of pious fraud, she must have meant to rest that duty directly upon the Fourth Commandment. Dr. Hessey is too candid to have deliberately and intentionally omitted any considerations adverse to his own view. But he has certainly failed to realize the strength of the argument drawn from the Prayer Book as to the intention of the Reformers and the theory of the Church of England. He refers, indeed, to the declaration of the Articles that "no man is free from obedience to the Commandments called moral," but has not, we think, noticed the significant fact, that our Reformers inserted the Ten Commandments not only in the Communion Office, but added them to the Creed and Lord's Prayer in the Baptismal vow—"the same Commandments which God spake in the 20th chapter of Exodus." Before the Reformation the Creed and Lord's Prayer were regarded as the summary of Christian doctrine. Since the Reformation, it is the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and *also the Ten Commandments*, which appear side by side as the triple groundwork of Christian faith and practice, not only in the Communion Office, but also in the Offices for Baptism and Confirmation; in several Rubrics; and in the canon which prescribes that they should be all written up in our churches. We cannot see, when these facts are duly weighed, how any other conclusion can be reached than that the Church teaches the Fourth Commandment to be binding still upon us by the authority of God, and that the requirements of that Commandment pass on from the seventh to the first day.



It is not our business to justify the Church of England in assigning the position she has done to the Decalogue. Yet we cannot refrain from reminding Dr. Hessey and “the Dominicals” of the solemn and peculiar sanctions attached to this portion of the Mosaic legislation. What does the terrible sight on Sinai mean?—what the writing of the Ten Words with “the Finger of God?”—what the remarkable words of Deut. v. 22 (“These words the Lord spake out of the fire with a great voice, and *He added no more*”), except that the precepts thus guarded with an environment of tremendous circumstance stand supreme and alone, not to be blended in their sanctity with other ordinances, but to be regarded as of superior and extraordinary authority and obligation? The Old Testament certainly gives no hint that the Fourth Commandment is of any less eternal force than the other nine. The marked and emphatic language of the prophetic books points quite in another direction;—and it is noteworthy also that the Sabbath is further separated from the general code by being given to the Israelites in Exodus xvi. earlier than the rest of the Decalogue.

The early Church, it is true, eschews the term Sabbath, as applied to the Lord’s Day, and does not appear distinctly to rest the obligation to observe the one on the Commandment which enjoins the other. The reason of this seems to us obvious enough. It was necessary for the first two centuries to protect the truth against corruption from Judaizers. With her usual policy—a policy which the ecclesiastical annals of every age copiously illustrate—the orthodox carefully avoided



words and expressions which, however appropriate in themselves, might give a handle to heretics. It is obvious how the turn of the Judaizers might have been served if language had been used respecting the Lord's Day and the Ten Commandments such as is common enough in later writers. Judaism fairly dead root and branch, and the use of the word Sabbath as applied to Sunday having ceased to be objectionable, soon found its way into the Church.

Dr. Hessey examines and rejects the theory that the institution of the Sabbath is coeval with creation. This part of the argument is a cardinal one, for it is obvious that if the Sabbath preceded the Mosaic law its obligation does not rest merely on that law. On this point, too, there seems good reason to differ with Dr. Hessey. Holding as we do that such an observance is founded deeply in the spiritual, moral, and physical needs of man; bearing in mind that it has always, with but little variety of external circumstance, been a recognized feature in the polity of God's Church for above four thousand years, and was continued, as it were naturally and as a matter of course, when the law given by Moses passed away,—it would seem to us *a priori* probable, in the absence of evidence to show that it was a novelty characteristic of the Jewish dispensation, that the Sabbath is as old as the human race itself. Not only is there no such evidence, but there is much in an opposite direction. Dr. Hessey tries hard and in good company to weaken the strong testimony of Genesis, chapter ii., verses 2 and 3:—

But still, the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day is men-



tioned so long before it was actually imposed upon man. That is, at any rate, a stubborn fact. How is it to be accounted for? We may reply with Bede, God sanctified the Sabbath, “non actu et reipsâ, sed decreto et destinatione suâ, quasi diceret, Quia quievit Deus die septimo, hinc illum diem ordinavit Sibi sacrum, ut indicetur festus colendus a Judæis.” We may remember, that though *we* may know perfectly well the cosmogony as it is set forth in Genesis, nay, the very words uttered by the Creator during and after the completion of His work, and the counsel and confederation of the glorious Three in One in accomplishing it, there is not sufficient evidence for believing that its great and wondrous tale was disclosed to mankind before Moses wrote it. Genesis was a revelation to Moses, not to Adam. We may urge, with Archbishop Bramhall, “that the sanctifying of the seventh day there, is no more than the ‘sanctifying’ of Jeremy ‘from his mother’s womb,’ that is the designing or destinating of him to be a prophet; or than the ‘separating’ of St. Paul ‘from his mother’s womb.’ So the sanctification of the seventh day may signify the decree or determination of God to sanctify it in due time; but *as* Jeremy’s actual sanctification, and St. Paul’s actual separation, followed long after they were born, *so* the actual sanctification of the Sabbath might follow long after the ground of God’s decree for the sanctification of that day, and the destination of it to that use.”—Pp. 136—138.

Against this reasoning it appears enough to quote the words of the text themselves—“On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.” What does this statement amount to—a statement which *may* have been written by Moses before he legislated under God’s direction for the Jews? Surely its plain meaning is that God *at* and *from the very beginning* consecrated the seventh day and set it apart with a peculiar blessing.



To God Himself, indeed, no one day can be more holy or restful than another. The honour put upon the day can therefore only have had reference to man. Against the plain teaching of this text the subtle glosses of expositors must for ever shatter themselves to pieces. If corroboration be asked for, it may be found in the language of Hebrews iv. What more plain than that Scripture from one end to the other recognizes the hallowing of the Sabbath day, and the right observance of it as required of man, from the very first; when the Sabbath with the world was “made for man?” Dr. Hessey does not fail to point out, as militating against the opinion of the Sabbatical obligation having a moral character, that no traces of its recognition are found amongst some nations. But it seems on the whole far more difficult, without the Sabbath, to account for the septenary division of time which prevailed amongst the patriarchs, and which is traceable in the annals of more than one ancient people, than it is to explain how the sacred institution, if enjoined on Adam, became extensively neglected. If it was so, it only shared the fate of other portions of primæval revelation. Entrusted for wise purposes to tradition only, the pure religion of our first parents soon became corrupted; with the majority of mankind it perished utterly; it was kept alive in a certain group of families by repeated interpositions of God; it was re-enacted and embodied in a durable and objective shape in the law of Moses. The foundation of the Sabbath is laid in creation itself; nay, the very dividing God’s glorious work into six portions, followed by the mystical rest of Him “who fainteth not, neither



is weary," must be taken as the archetype of man's life in its labours and its repose. Standing thus at the very birth of time and of nature, inwrought thus into their very primordial structure, the Sabbath would seem to be for all generations, and to lay men under a prescription defeasible only when the ages shall cease to be.

Differing thus from Dr. Hessey in thinking the Sabbath to be Patriarchal as distinct from Jewish in origin, our views on other subsidiary but not unimportant points will differ also. Exodus xvi. is carefully discussed by him, and Hengstenberg cited to the effect that there is proof in the narrative of the Sabbath being up to that time a novelty to the Israelites. Hengstenberg's opinion deserves every consideration, but on this, as on every other item of the debate, his and any other authority can be confronted by an equal and adverse one; and the decision rolls back to the inquirer himself. This being so, we shall not hesitate to give our own opinion, which is that the points raised by Hengstenberg and Dr. Hessey are just as well explained on the ordinary supposition of the Sabbath having died out during the oppression of the taskmaster in Egypt, as they are on the hypothesis that the Sabbath was at the Exodus a novel institution. Indeed, to our thinking, Exodus xvi. has an air of referring rather to a familiar and established ordinance than to a strange one; for surely, if imposed for the first time, it would be accompanied with that explanation and introduction which in fact is totally wanting.

On grounds, then, both Scriptural and ecclesiastical, we feel unable to divorce, as Dr. Hessey does, the Sab-



bath from the Lord's Day. Nor do we feel at all overpowered by the difficulty that if the Lord's Day has inherited its sanctity from the Sabbath, and from the Fourth Commandment, we are bound in consistency to keep the Saturday and not the Sunday. Doubtless this would be so if not otherwise ordered by an authority equal to that which sculptured the Ten Words on the table of stone. We should not dare, on human authority, to tamper with or to disturb one jot or one tittle of commands conveyed to man as were these. But nothing can be plainer than that the New Testament sets aside with adequate authority the Jewish Sabbath, whilst at the same time forbidding us to break one of the least of God's commandments. Couple with this the example of the Apostles and of the Apostolic Church in honouring the day of the Resurrection, and the significant name applied to it, apparently quite casually, by St. John, "the Lord's Day," points on which the testimony of the New Testament is rightly estimated and dwelt upon by Dr. Hessey as clear and decisive, and the grounds and obligation of observing Sunday seem to us definite enough. They are, to sum up, the law of nature; or if it be preferred, a law of the God of nature, emanating indeed from His supreme will, yet primordial and palmary; a law re-stated and re-enforced on Sinai, obligatory on us now as it has always been on man, though stripped on plain warrant of the New Testament of trappings which adapted it for the Jewish economy, and invested with a new and a Christian environment such as befits the spirit of the later dispensation.



To point out that a theory is dangerous, and likely to lead to ill consequences, is of itself no sufficient refutation. A theory, if deserving of consideration at all, justly asks to be appraised by its reasons, not by its results. The truth on all matters which it is our duty to discuss must be honestly spoken, and the God of truth will provide for the issues. But having stated why we cannot accept Dr. Hessey's solution of the Sunday question as altogether adequate, and having indicated briefly the outline of that which seems to us sounder and more complete, we have earned a right to say that we think ill results in practice would follow should Dr. Hessey carry all his hearers and readers with him. It cannot be demonstrated from the New Testament alone that the observance of Sunday is binding, as the undoubted will and command of God, upon all who acknowledge the authority of the Bible. For Churchmen, indeed, there remains the injunction of the Church—fortified, in this case, by the antiquity and universality of the Sunday festival. Far be it from us to make light of the authority of the Church on such a matter. But for the sake of others we should be sorry that the obligation to hallow the Lord's Day should be rested wholly or chiefly upon this footing. The fact that the Apostles hallowed this day we, with Dr. Hessey, hold to be established from the New Testament,—and a weighty fact it is. But it cannot from that fact alone be inferred that the obligation is a perpetual one. The Church has on wise grounds dispensed with several ecclesiastical arrangements which were originally founded by the Apostles, and which are accredited by Scripture;



Deaconesses, for instance,—the Love Feast,—the Kiss of Peace. We have looked anxiously at this point, and must avow that Dr. Hessey's theory fails in our judgment to show a satisfactory reason why the Sunday is not to be regarded as one of those ecclesiastical ordinances which may be ordered by the Church variously as spiritual expediency shall require. It is unlikely, indeed, that the Church would ever exercise such powers as regards the Lord's Day, if she had them; though such an exercise has more than once been mooted. But it seems to us important that the sanctity of the Lord's Day should have a foundation as universal as is the name of Christian itself, and Dr. Hessey's theory plainly provides for it one which, however adequate to us, is but partially recognized. He cannot produce any *positive command* from the New Testament; the mere example of the Apostles is not necessarily obligatory in all things; from the Old Testament he cuts us off. The belief, happily all but universal amongst religious men in England, that Sunday is to be kept holy on no other and no meaner command than that of God Himself, is far too precious and far too salutary for us to welcome any opinions which might tend, however undesignedly, to shake it.

In the practical part of his subject Dr. Hessey will secure a far more general concurrence. His last chapter treats of the mode in which Sunday should be kept, and its remarks and suggestions are large-hearted, wise, and pious. Indeed it is cheering amidst the great diversity and multitude of theoretical opinions about the Lord's Day, to see such a concord



amongst religious men as to the right and desirable mode of keeping it. Englishmen have long acquiesced in a sort of national and traditional mode of spending the day. Ours are times when the why and the wherefore of every thing are agitated and sifted : and Sunday observance must, amongst the rest, undergo its share of questioning. Dr. Hessey has by no means disposed of all—if indeed he has of any—of the difficulties which surround the question, though he goes thoroughly into it,—honestly grapples with it, and brings to bear upon it great learning, impartiality, and patience. Whatever be the issue of the debates now rife, about “Sunday, its origin, history, and present obligation,” we hope that the practical accord which has hitherto subsisted amongst us will not be disturbed. The reverence so generally paid to Sunday by our people of all denominations, and even by those not decidedly religious, is very intimately connected with the prosperity and greatness of England, and with her character as a Christian nation.



## ESSAY V.

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*The Life of the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Wilson, D.D., Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man.* Compiled chiefly from Original Documents, by the Rev. JOHN KEBLE. Two Vols., 8vo. J. H. Parker.

THERE is no work of ecclesiastical biography which was better worth doing well, and none which more needed to be well done, than the Life of Bishop Thomas Wilson. We must add that there is no one who could more fitly take up the task than the respected author of *The Christian Year*. Of lives of Bishop Wilson there were indeed two extant already; the older and original one compiled by the Rev. Clement Cruttwell; the later, written in 1819 by the Rev. Hugh Stowell, Rector of Ballaugh, Isle of Man, the father of Canon Hugh Stowell, of Manchester. The former of these is sufficiently meagre and imperfect, and is, in fact, only prefixed as a sort of Introduction to the Bishop's works, which were first published, under Mr. Cruttwell's superintendence, in 1781. It is interesting to note that Mr. Cruttwell was a medical man at Bath, and had under his charge the Bishop's only surviving son and heir, Dr. Wilson. Dr. Wilson entrusted to his professional attendant the editing of his father's works,



and the editor was so impressed by the example and writings of his author that he changed his profession and became a clérgyman himself. Mr. Stowell's biography of the Bishop went through three or four editions, and is written in a spirit thoroughly appreciative, not to say enthusiastic, as regards its subject. Indeed, it furnishes one amongst many pleasing proofs, and Mr. Keble himself might be suggested as another, that it is possible to have very decided Church principles of what may be even thought of a strong party complexion, and to take a leading part in maintaining and defending them, and yet by piety, consistency, and disinterestedness, to conciliate the hearty affection and respect of those whose ecclesiastical sympathies are quite of an opposite tone. But Mr. Stowell's *Life of Bishop Wilson*, though valuable as having preserved local traces and anecdotes gleaned on the very scenes of the Bishop's labours, is written in a somewhat stilted and conventional style. It is, in fact, throughout an Evangelical sermon on a High Church text; and is so occupied in edifying the reader that very much which is essential to any thing like a complete and true conception of the Bishop's character and labours is altogether unnoticed. Mr. Keble's *Life of the Bishop*, now given to us in two good-sized volumes, and forming the concluding portion of the "Anglo-Catholic Library," is therefore on every account welcome: welcome as from a pen which always enriches our literature when it adds to it; and welcome because filling a manifest gap in our ecclesiastical annals. In a literary point of view it would be possible enough to find fault with



Mr. Keble's work. It is in truth somewhat long, and in parts somewhat heavy. There are very numerous and copious extracts, for the most part now made *publici juris*, from the Registers of the diocese of Sodor and Man, from the Rolls-office at Castle Rushen, from the *Sacra Privata*, Letters, and other memoranda of the Bishop. The biographer's modesty, fidelity, and scrupulous veneration for his subject, have oftentimes deterred him from that free and bold use of his ample materials which in such a hand would vastly have increased the attractiveness and interest of his work. The documents given are often of a legal and technical character, and often might have judiciously admitted of abridgment. So, too, the repeated records of cases of discipline, following one after another with little variation of symptoms or treatment, might, so far as we can see, have been summarized with advantage after a few specimens had been given in integrity. We must add, however, Mr. Keble's characteristic apology:—

Among many defects of which he is himself conscious, and many more, doubtless, which the reader will too easily discern, the compiler would wish to add one word in excuse for the length to which this Memoir is extended, and another for the freedom with which the Bishop's private thoughts, and the follies and frailties of many with whom he had to do, are here exhibited. One answer will serve for both. It was not within the writer's skill to tell the truth concerning him adequately with less minuteness or with more concealment. And as he found that in approved histories of times even nearer our own, the personal faults of those concerned in public transactions are not passed over, so far at least as they may reasonably affect men's judgment on those transactions, he did not shrink from taking the same liberty in this case; the rather, that very many of the painful matters thus brought forward were more



than mitigated by after repentance and amendment.—Preface, pp. viii, ix.

In outward and worldly incidents the life of Bishop Thomas Wilson presents little that is striking. He was the son of a Cheshire yeoman, whose family, however, had long been of established respectability in the neighbourhood. He was born in 1663, educated at a good grammar-school in Chester, and removed at eighteen to Trinity College, Dublin, with a view to studying for the profession of medicine. We do not find that he distinguished himself at college; indeed, his present biographer has to plead for a verdict of “not proven” as to certain charges of indolent and irregular habits advanced on the strength of some entries found in the buttery books of his college, which place on record the fines incurred by Wilson for infractions of academical rules. It would seem, however difficult some of these items may be to explain, that Wilson’s college life must have been characterized on the whole by exemplary conduct and earnest application to study. Certain it is that the judgment of his friends, and those wise and good ones, pointed decisively to the ministry as the occupation for which he was peculiarly fitted, and so strongly was this felt by his ecclesiastical superiors that he was ordained Deacon by Dr. Moreton, Bishop of Kildare, on the same day as the cathedral church of the diocese was reconsecrated after being rebuilt, whilst yet short by several months of the canonical age, and without a title. His leading friend at this time was Mr. (afterwards Archdeacon) Hewetson, a man of wealth and position, and, above all, of decided



piety and churchmanship, whose acquaintance he had made at Dublin. Rarely have we met with any thing more real, sober-minded, and earnest than the paper entitled "Mich. Hewetson's Memorandums concerning the Consecration of the Church of Kildare, and the Ordination of his dear friend Tho. Wilson, with some Advices thereupon." Hewetson gave Wilson on this day "another precious little relic" which yet remains, "the little memorandum-book which his friend gave him soon after the ceremony, having first inserted in his own handwriting the foregoing account of the day's proceedings. It is a very small duodecimo, bound in black leather, with brazen clasps, and answers exactly to the description given of it by Cruttwell." Mr. Wilson set a great value on it, carefully preserved it, and continued to enter in it minutes of such occurrences as he thought worthy of notice, as well as his prayers on particular occasions. "The occurrences for the most part are entered at one end of the book, the prayers at the other; between them both, however, they fall very short of filling up the whole book, 158 pages. It seems that when this was not in the way, he just took up some other vacant MS. book, and inserted the prayer or memorandum where he found room for it. And so it came to pass that his *Sacra Privata* diffuse themselves through four or five volumes, of which the original, and in some respects the most interesting, is this gift of Hewetson's."

Wilson was next year provided with a cure and maintenance by his maternal uncle, Dr. Sherlock, the author of the well-known *Practical Christian*. Sherlock



was rector of Winwick, which at that time had three chapelries attached to it ; for one of which, Newchurch Kenyon, now a rectory with 2500 souls, then a hamlet five miles from the mother church, Wilson was accepted as curate. He remained here, residing with Sherlock till that "kind and pious uncle" died in 1689, and, indeed, for three years afterwards under the next rector, Thomas Bennet, afterwards Master of University College, Oxford. We cannot do better than quote a page or two from the narrative of this part of Wilson's life. They will illustrate not only Mr. Keble's manner of handling his subject, but more than one trait also of that subject's character ; his self-denying charity, his systematic management of it as of every thing, and his peculiar mode of seasoning all his doings with prayer :—

Wilson's stipend at Newchurch was 30*l.* per annum, only one-third more than what had sufficed him at the University. But as he lived with his uncle in the parsonage of Winwick, and was an excellent economist, he was enabled out of this small allowance to set apart one-tenth for charitable purposes, if indeed he had not done so from the first hour that he had any thing which could be called an income, that is, from his first going to the University ; for so much seems to be implied in a memorandum dated 1693, when he was leaving Winwick for Knowsley: "Having *hitherto* but given a tenth of my *incomes*" (the plural seems used purposely, to denote all his means from whatever source), "I do for the future purpose to give" so much more.—Vol. i. p. 31.

The earliest entry on the subject in his existing papers shows that the setting aside of money for alms was with him a devotional act, a solemn sacrifice. It consists of the following prayer, "*Before laying aside of Alms for ye Poor,*" with certain texts prefixed :—

It is by Thy bounty and providence, O God, yt I want nothing



wch is needful eithr for my soul or body ; Be pleas'd in mercy to receive this small acknowledgment of my thankfulness for ye many favours wch by Thy goodness I every day meet with, and give me grace yt while I am able, I never turn away my face from any poor man, yt Thy face and ye light of Thy countenance may never be turned away from me. O Lord my God ! whatever I have prepared for Thy poor cometh of Thee, and of Thy own do I give Thee. Pardon all my vain expences, and teach me so to husband the riches wth wch I am blessed, that I may always have wherewith to offer a testimony of my duty and gratitude to my great Benefactor, to be bestowed on those poor people whom Thou shalt direct me to relieve. And grant, O Lord, that if ever it should be Thy pleasure to change my circumstances into a worse condition, give me grace yt I may bear it patiently, knowing assuredly yt my treasure is in heaven, to wch place I most humbly beseech Thee to bring me for ye sake of J. Xt. Amen.

The manner in which he made this dedication was (we are informed) as follows:—On the receipt of all monies, he regularly placed the portion designed by himself, as well as what was given him by others for charitable uses, in the drawer of a cabinet, with a note of the value, to be kept sacred for the use of the poor, and on no account whatever to be touched for any other purposes. The form of the note, as follows, is copied from the original:—"Jan. 29, 1750. Put into this drawer Twenty Pounds British, being one year's money, the bounty of the Right Honourable the Lady Eliz. Hastings, for the year, and payable at Martinmas, 1750. Thomas Sodor and Man." If the money placed there was his own, the note differed only in distinguishing from whence, or how, the money had been paid to him. And into this sacred repository, called "the Poor's Drawer," at first a tenth, then a fifth, a third, and at length the half, of his revenues, were placed ; and whenever he deposited the poor man's portion, he did it with the same awe and reverence as if it had been an offering to Heaven.

In Wilson's several memorandum-books, this prayer exists in four several forms, and is a good specimen of his practice of re-writing his devotional pieces over and over with slight variations, rather than composing fresh ones for the time being, which to many (Bishop Taylor, for example) seems to have approved itself as the more natural way. Doubtless Wilson's feeling in this, as in many



other characteristic practices, was eminently that of our most genial poet:—

“The child is father to the man.  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.”

Another department of active charity in which Bishop Wilson was eminent throughout his pastoral life was administering medical aid to those who stood in need of it. For this he was especially qualified, having been at first intended (as we have seen), and in part educated, for the medical profession. And he made it, as might be expected, matter of special devotion. The precious memorandum-book contains two prayers, written seemingly about the same time with that on giving of alms.—Vol. i. pp. 32, 33.

Sherlock had been chaplain to the great Earl James of Derby, and had been entrusted by his son and widowed mother with the task of restoring Church order in the isle and diocese of Man after the troubles of the Great Rebellion. To this excellent man and consistent Churchman we must under God attribute the main part in the forming and disciplining of Wilson's character and opinions, and also, in all likelihood, his introduction to the family of Derby. In 1692 Wilson “accepted from William, ninth Earl of Derby, an appointment to be his domestic chaplain, and tutor to his only son, Lord Strange.” To these offices was added that of Master of the Almshouse at Lathom. We must not dwell on the fidelity and discretion with which, under circumstances more than once of a trying character, Wilson acquitted himself of duties in themselves delicate and difficult, and sure to be more than ordinarily so for an uncompromising and sincere Churchman like Wilson to carry out in the house and family of a great English nobleman of the seventeenth century.



His zeal and fidelity were so remarkable, that in 1697 Wilson had the bishopric of Sodor and Man pressed upon him by his patron, in whose gift as Lord of the Isle the see then was. Lord Strange was now eighteen years old; the bishopric had been vacant four years; the Crown, at the instance of the Archbishop of York as Metropolitan, was urgent that an appointment should be made without delay, and the earl practically forced it upon his chaplain. "The bishopric was, of course," as Mr. Keble observes, "the greatest trust, though far from the most eligible benefice in the earl's gift; of course, also, Wilson must at once have been thought of as the very person to be charged with it: what remained of Lord Strange's education might be otherwise provided for, more easily than a competent Bishop for the poor neglected island could be found." The ordinary income of the see seems at that time to have been about 300*l.*, whilst all the appurtenances of it, the house, the demesnes, &c., were in the most dilapidated condition, and the cathedral was an absolute ruin. Wilson had at once to raise and disburse a sum equal to four and a half years' income, in order to put things in barely tenable condition. Yet at that very time he writes—

"My Lord Derby offered me the Parsonage of Baddesworth in Yorkshire to hold it *in commendam* with my Bishoprick; I refused it as utterly inconsistent with my duty, and an obligation I have sometime since laid myself under of *never taking two ecclesiastical preferments with cure of souls*; and especially where I must necessarily be absent from one of them; and of wch resolution it does not yet repent me yt I made it." His patron was of course fully aware of the poverty and dilapidated condition of the see; and it might seem, as no doubt it did to many, that there would be no inconsistency in accepting for a time the help which this second



vacancy at Badsworth placed so seasonably within his reach. Some might even call it a providential opportunity. But he had "opened his mouth to the Lord," and he could not "draw back." How great this self-denial was will appear further as we go on. And who can say how fruitful in blessing through his episcopate all along such a courageous and faithful beginning may have proved? Almost all Wilson's predecessors had kept their English preferences, if they had any, by reason of the poverty of the see. His scruples must have appeared at the time very strange and high-flown.—Vol. i. p. 82.

For fifty-eight years, till his death at the age of ninety-three, did this good man abide in the sphere of duty thus allotted him. The island at that time was reckoned so remote as to be a kind of place of banishment to those who had to reside in it. Mr. Keble gives some amusing extracts from the letters of Bishop Levinz, Wilson's immediate predecessor, in which he petitions the Primate to procure him "a house and prebend att Winchester, or something equivalent, that he may have wherewithall to protect him for the future from wintering in the severe clime of Man." He speaks of "his Patmos, wheer all the comfort he can promise himselfe is from this topique only, that there he may have time enough for his prayers:" bewails "the confinement of his melancholy retreat," "his disconsolate residence," and "the terrible storms, tempests, and inundations of rayn." Wilson, however, was far from treating the bishopric of Man, as has been too generally done, as a stepping-stone to a more splendid Episcopal throne. He was offered English bishoprics both by Queen Anne and her successor, and refused them on the ground that he should better serve the Church of Christ by conscientiously and thoroughly administering the smaller



overseership than by less perfect occupation of wider duties and grander opportunities.

The chief interest belonging to the annals of Wilson's Episcopate centres in his revival through his diocese of the primitive ecclesiastical discipline. For attempting this the circumstances of the isle offered very remarkable facilities. It was, in fact, a feudal family on a large scale, with the Earl of Derby for its head. Dissenters there were none, or next to none, amongst its 14,000 people. The ancient canons of the Manx Church were yet far from obsolete, and "godly discipline," if feeble and intermittent, had by no means utterly perished either in name or thing. Wilson found no difficulty whatever in procuring in 1703 the passing by his own Synod, and the sanctioning by all the civil authorities of the isle, "the twenty-four Keys," and the Earl's Governor and Council, with the final *imprimatur* of the earl himself, of a complete series of ecclesiastical constitutions, "in which the existing rules were fully recognized, and provision made for enforcing by their means the whole edifying system of the Prayer Book." The island was subject to the Metropolitcal see of York, and therefore of course "bound by the English canons as any other diocese would be; with this difference, that it was free to carry them out; the Acts of Parliament which supersede them in England having no force in Man, because that island was not especially mentioned in them." On this code Mr. Keble remarks as follows:—

The main characteristic of the Manx ecclesiastical code was its perseverance in supposing that the people subject to it had faith,



long after that too flattering idea had been practically given up in every other portion of the Reformed Church of England. For since the Toleration Act enabling all the world to withdraw themselves from the obedience of the Church, yet to retain their full right to communion with the same Church; and the previous Act, 13 Car. II. c. 12, abolishing the oath *ex officio*, and therefore making it impossible to protect holy things except in the comparatively rare case of very definite crimes fully established by legal proof;—the English Church had surrendered itself, both in theory and practice, to the hard necessity of doing without the ancient discipline. No blame need attach to its governors; the discipline presupposes faith generally prevailing; faith, first in the reality and grievous effect of excommunication; and next, in the real danger of taking a false oath. When these convictions are generally gone from men's minds, Church courts and Church laws may do much incidental good, but they can only help you to the shadow of that for which mainly they were ordained. In the diocese of Man, down to Wilson's time, this faith was still remaining in some tolerable measure. An oath was generally accounted a serious thing: and (as has been mentioned before) there were hardly any Dissenters. To all, therefore, who had any religion at all, excommunication was a reality. Accordingly we find (and the same is generally affirmed of the Northern civil codes, which in part displaced those of Rome) that a great part of the evidence in many cases lay in the voluntary oaths of one or more of the parties. Thus "in a difference depending betwixt party and party, when one gives it to the other upon his oath absolutely, there shall be no further hearing of that matter in the Spiritual Court." This implies so much trust in men's oaths as to ignore all risk of collusion.—Vol. i. pp. 202, 203.

From the first the Bishop carried with him the popular feeling of his flock. They went heartily with him from the very beginning of his energetic activity amongst them to the close:—

We hear and read sometimes of the happy conformity of some well-conducted parish to the plans of some popular and self-denying clergyman. But for a whole diocese we shall hardly meet with any thing, at least in modern Church history, superior or even



equal to this. Cruttwell in few words expresses most significantly the effectiveness of the reformed Manx canons, when he remarks that they “supersede virtually the Preface to the Communion Office.” And he adds, no doubt from trustworthy information, “Lord Chancellor King was so much pleased with these constitutions, that he said, ‘If the ancient discipline of the Church were lost, it might be found in all its purity in the Isle of Man.’”—Vol. i. pp. 211, 212.

The Bishop had been largely instrumental during the first year of his Episcopate in obtaining for the island an advantageous settlement from the Earl of Derby of certain civil grievances under which its inhabitants laboured. He never ceased also in many negotiations with the Lord, the successive Governors, and sometimes with the British Government, to identify himself with the interests of his people, and to act wherever he rightly could do so as their firm and very able champion. His zeal for their temporal good as well as his boundless charity, his personal gentleness and dignity, and his impartiality, brought about the willing acceptance of an ecclesiastical regimen which, in modern times at least, is quite without a parallel or even a second. In minutely recording the working of Wilson’s discipline, and commenting upon it, Mr. Keble occupies two-thirds of the volumes before us. Some of Wilson’s canons are curious enough, and evidently characteristic of a very rude state of society:—

“As in Law 22, the use of certain reproachful words is made punishable by wearing the ‘bridle’ at the market cross, or to make seven Sundays’ penance in several parish churches.” A very severe censure, it may seem, for just calling a man a dog. Perhaps among the Manxmen of that time it might be a higher affront than we now account it, and so likely to lead to a breach of the peace. As to



the "bridle," it is a kind of gag, which being put in a person's mouth, hinders him or her from speaking articulately. A specimen, made by the order of Bishop Wilson, was lately, perhaps is still now, shown as a relic at Bishop's Court. Law 23 has a still stranger sound. It ordains that "common whores be drawn after a boat in the sea during the Ordinary's appointment." And there are repeated instances of its being carried out in Wilson's time as before: just as in an early stage of English criminal law, "open lewdness grossly scandalous" was punishable by the temporal judges, not only with fine and imprisonment, but also with such corporal infamous punishment as to the court in its discretion might seem meet, according to the heinousness of the crime; such punishment, for example, as "whipping at the cart's tail," to which Shakespeare makes Lear allude as to no very unusual thing. This, in the Isle of Man, was changed into being dragged, without whipping, through the water, at the stern of a boat, which was called its "tail," probably in allusion to the other punishment. The Manx fashion seems the less unseemly as well as the less severe of the two. Law 19 provides a special censure for one striking a minister; another indication of an uncouth state of society. He is to be "excommunicated *ipso facto*, and do penance, and after satisfaction given to the law, to receive absolution, and be received at the church stile into the church by the minister reading before him the fifty-first Psalm, and before the congregation to repeat his schedule after the minister." There is something in this severe, but not surely unloving. The offended person saying the Psalm for the offender, and so making himself partaker of his penance, expresses any thing but revenge or priestly haughtiness.—Vol. i. pp. 201, 202.

Accordingly we read again and again of penances performed "bare-footed, and bare-legged, and bare-headed, covered over with a white linen sheet, and a small white wand in his hand." And in some cases the severest inflictions were carried out where they seem to our mind peculiarly shocking and barbarous:—

"Katharine Kinred, though rigorously dealt with before for her frequent instances of whoredom (this being the fourth bastard child



she has born), is now found to be in a manner irreclaimable, in regard neither the corporal nor the spiritual punishments inflicted have had the due effect upon her; she, after imprisonment, penance, and dragging in the sea, continued still remorseless. This her hardened and impenitent state loudly calls for the most dreadful sentence—viz., to be excluded from the society of Christians, but that a gross ignorance, and a degree of unsettledness and defect of understanding, might hinder the expected impression of it on her soul. For this time, therefore, it is ordered that she be twenty-one days closely imprison'd, and (as soon as the weather will permit) dragged in the sea again after a boat, and also perform public penance in all the churches of this island; after which, if she be found worthy, she shall be received into the Church's peace; or otherwise, which we pray God prevent, she will fall under the fearful sentence before-mention'd." This is signed by the Bishop and both the Vicars-General. The first part of the sentence, it appears, was executed, and the penances in the several churches began. They took a long time, for the earliest reported dates May 24, 1719, the latest July 24, 1720; and at last a real impression seems to have been produced upon the poor half-witted creature. The certificates of the clergy all run in this strain:—"I do hope she'll become a true penitent, considering the defect of her understanding;"—"did penance in appearance becomingly;"—"with a degree of concern not to be expected of her;"—"as became a penitent;"—"with as much submission and discretion as can be expected of the like of her." The Bishop's conclusion is—"This unhappy woman gives very many promises of leading a better life for the time to come. In hopes of this, and that age and the experience of the troubles she has met with, and the good advice and frequent admonitions she will have from her pastor, may prevail with her to lament the sins she has been guilty of during the remainder of her life, and that she may, according to her capacity, bring forth fruits meet for repentance, I do desire that she may, after performing public penance, be received into the peace of the Church according to the form appointed for that purpose.—Given under my hand, this 13th of Aug., 1720."

The result in this case, as far as we are told it, appears to justify Bishop Wilson's idea—which was, I suppose, that a dull and very childish heart and mind, hardened by ill habits, could scarcely be



turned into a better way without some bodily and outward affliction; and he adopted that which the law of the land prescribed."—Vol. i. pp. 296. 298.

For ten years "the Discipline," launched thus amidst general approval, was carried out with a high hand. The decrees of the Consistory Court were summarily backed where necessary by the civil power; and as Man did not enjoy the advantage of constabulary, a soldier from the nearest garrison was at once despatched on the demand of the officer of the Spirituality to enforce obedience to the sentence. Wilson, though a strict and watchful disciplinarian, proved himself a considerate and even tender one. Again and again do the entries in the register record remissions and relaxations issued by the Bishop to offenders on representations from the clergy that the penitence seemed deep and hearty; and such indulgences are wont to be accompanied by a few pithy and discriminating words of remark or exhortation, such as would be sure on a rude yet sensitive race to tell almost as much as the penances themselves. But in Man, as in larger communities, the harmony between Church and State did not continue perpetual. In 1713 Governor Mawdesley was removed, and superseded by Captain Alexander Horne. This man would seem to have been ignorant, coarse, and self-sufficient, rather than deliberately malevolent; and the then Lord of the Isle, James, tenth Earl of Derby, who had in 1703 succeeded Earl William, the Bishop's patron, was a good deal like his subordinate. A Mrs. Henricks was under excommunication for gross immorality, followed up by contumacy. She took the unheard-of step of



appealing from the ecclesiastical authorities to the Governor and the Earl. Horne received and entertained the appeal, in spite of island custom and ordinance to the contrary; and “thus the Governor and the Bishop were committed to something like mediæval warfare for years to come.” Mrs. Henricks was protected in goods and person from the penalties of the Consistory Court, and peremptory orders were issued to the Bishop, of course in vain, to cancel her excommunication. This quarrel soon became complicated and aggravated by others. The Bishop had always exercised the power, as did Bishops in the most primitive times, of remitting or reducing penalties imposed by the spiritual courts. But as the fines levied in these courts went *in usum Domini*, Governor Horne and his clique challenged the Bishop’s right in this particular as operating to the prejudice of the Lord. A claim was set up also on behalf of the Earl’s retainers for exemption from Church censures; and the Governor took on him to order briefs to be read in the churches without the sanction of the diocesan, and went so far as even to deny the Bishop’s authority to summon his Convocation of Clergy at pleasure:—

We may notice, by the way, that two at least of the points now mooted between the spiritual and temporal courts were in substance the same (though on so minute a scale) with some of those which had divided whole nations and Churches—not to say the whole of Christendom—in the middle ages. The Lord’s claim to have his household exempt from spiritual discipline corresponds with Henry the Second’s quarrel against Becket for presuming to excommunicate the King’s tenants. And the Bishop’s summoning his Synod at will was the prerogative of which the other Henry, in the sixteenth century, showed himself so jealous, and which he so



effectually extinguished. Thus, as in so many other points, the annals of this small Island of Man prove to be a sort of miniature reflection of far more important histories.—Vol. i. p. 465.

The quarrel proceeded through the usual stages. The Bishop is cited before the Governor and Council to answer for his alleged offences; and of course he refuses to appear. At length, on June 29, 1722, “his entry in *Episcopalia* is ‘St. Peter’s Day. See the Epistle’” (that is, St. Peter in prison, the Church praying for him, and his deliverance by an angel):—

“I and my two vicars were carried to prison by three soldiers for not paying a fine of 90*l.*, most arbitrarily imposed upon us.” It was a day already memorable in the Bishop’s calendar, as we have seen, for more than one special favour—the day of his entering into holy orders, and of the deliverance of his father and brothers from shipwreck. It is interesting to observe that he enters this imprisonment in the list which he kept of “Special Favours,” as well as in that of “Merciful Visitations and Chastisements.” In the former, “I had the honour of being imprisoned for a faithful discharge of my duty.” In the latter, “I and my two vicars-general were fined 90*l.*, and imprisoned in Castle Ryssin (*sic*) for censuring and refusing to take off the censures of certain offenders, which punishment and contempt I desire to receive from God, as a means of humbling me,” &c. The joy of the confessor and the submission of the penitent,—were they ever more touchingly blended, more simply expressed?—Vol. ii. pp. 518, 519.

An appeal to the King in Council, though obstructed by Lord Derby and his officers in every possible way, effected at last the Bishop’s release after an incarceration of nine weeks, but not until from harsh treatment and confinement he had lost the use of his right hand, which he never wholly regained. The breach thus consummated between the Lord of the Isle and the Bishop continued unabated during the governorship of Horne



and his successor Horton, and the discipline of course suffered accordingly. Yet it is interesting to note that whilst submission to it was in great measure voluntary, or at least could only be enforced by strictly spiritual sanctions, it was still very largely operative. Many offenders, and those not always of the humbler classes, yielded themselves to it, and sometimes were brought round to do so after lengthened periods of contumacy. Many did so when they well knew that the active interference of their temporal sovereign would be gladly afforded to support them in braving the Bishop's utmost displeasure, and some did so in spite of downright opposition and persecution from the Governor and the soldiery. Wilson had throughout his trials the hearty sympathy of his people—partly, no doubt, as the victim of lawless oppression from which they themselves suffered at times not a little; and from which they were liable to suffer just what the ruling powers thought fit to inflict; but partly also because they saw in him “their faithful pastor and unwearied benefactor.” When he was carried to prison “the concern of the people was so great that they assembled in crowds, and it was with difficulty they were restrained from pulling down the Governor's house by the mild behaviour and persuasion of the Bishop, who was permitted to speak to them through a grated window.” During his confinement, which was in the Keep of the Castle, “the regular prison of the island, a dreary dungeon where prisoners were crowded together in dark and damp cells,” “several hundreds assembled daily under the windows to receive his in-



structions ;” and they showed their respect for him in the most acceptable way in their power by obeying his precepts when he could no longer enforce obedience. “Things went on according to the promise given to Israel in their festive season, ‘Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.’ Bishop Wilson used to tell his friends that ‘he never governed his diocese so well as in the time of his imprisonment ;’ and that ‘if he could have borne the confinement without injury to his health he would have been content to remain a prisoner during life, for the good of his flock, who were more pious and devout than at any other time.’” His release was a day of general jubilee throughout the island. The populace, restrained by the Bishop from spreading their clothes under his feet, were hardly contented with scattering flowers in his path, lining the road all the way from Rushen Castle to Bishop’s Court, and making “a loud and merry noise” with “flutes made of the elder-tree.”

But we must not pursue the details of Wilson’s episcopate further. That he was eminently successful as a Church ruler is beyond possibility of question. Nor did his success arise merely from the exceptional advantages he enjoyed in being Bishop of a small island diocese, exempted from the latitudinarian enactments to which the Church’s other dioceses in his time were subjected. The interesting pages before us abound in striking proofs of the extraordinary personal ascendancy he acquired over his people. During his old age we read—



It is related of him that a short time before his death, whilst he was coming down from his bed-chamber, a crowd of poor people were assembled in the hall waiting to receive his benediction and his alms, when he was overheard by them uttering the following ejaculation, "God be merciful to me a sinner, a vile sinner, a miserable sinner!" All his cry was for *mercy*.—Vol. ii. 958.

And again, at his funeral—

The mourners might be said to be all the inhabitants of the Isle, except those who were kept at home by necessity. They gathered from all quarters to attend him to his last home as they or their fathers had done thirty years before to escort him from his prison to his earthly home. And since from the palace to the church, a distance of more than a mile, there were of necessity frequent resting-places, at every such pause there was a contest among the crowd who should have the honour of carrying the precious remains for a few moments on their shoulders; and such of them as were admitted esteemed it a peculiar honour.—Vol. ii. p. 965.

Still more striking is the policy adopted by one of the Manx incumbents, some sixteen years after Wilson's death, when he found his people abandoning the church for the chapel—

He tells his parishioners from the pulpit, "Next Sunday, good people, Bishop Wilson will preach here in Manx." And it is astonishing what multitudes it brings together, "insomuch that the church cannot contain them, and heard with such silent attention, that it quite overpowers himself, and fills his heart." And "since he has begun to use these divine discourses his people are returning fast to their parish church, and are more frequent communicants."—Vol. ii. p. 969.

And yet, though thus personally honoured and beloved, and though his work was taken up when it fell at length from his dying hands and carried on by a like-minded successor, Bishop Hildesley, still it is undeniable that the island now exhibits few tokens of the deep and clear religious impression which a man of



Wilson's stamp might be expected to make. Within a few years of Wilson's decease Wesleyanism was triumphant in Man. Three-fourths of the population caught at once the contagion of that feverish religionism; nor do the subsequent annals of the island enable us to reverse in any considerable degree the unfavourable judgment to which such a grave fact points. The Manxmen proved most pointedly that in spite of Wilson's energetic and lengthened labours amongst them, they had no real hold on Church doctrine and fellowship, and no prophylactic against sudden and utter declension from a system in which they had been so ably trained. After Hildesley's episcopate the island cooled down quickly to the ordinary low spiritual level of the times; and rushed at once therefrom into red-hot Methodism. In spite of the halo of reverence which still encircles Wilson's memory, there is in the island he loved so well as little sympathy for his principles as may be found in Cornwall or Wales. How shall we explain the speedy and total disappearance of a system, so venerable and excellent in itself, so generally received, and so vigorously administered during three generations of Manxmen? The causes of this are various, and some of them obvious. Wilson was not on the whole happy in his clergy. His choice was always limited, from the necessity of providing men who could officiate in Manx. Nearly all the benefices of the island, too, were in the gift of the Lord; and Earl James during his long feuds with the Bishop took pains to fill them on every opportunity with men as little like the Bishop as possible.



Even his Archdeacon was Lord Derby's nominee, and during a great part of his struggles Archdeacon Horrobin was amongst his most troublesome opponents. Horrobin was one of those men of whom our own days have plenty; he was benevolent in instincts, excellent probably in intentions, but plagued with that non-theological cast of mind which leads a man to keep uttering the deadliest heresies whilst he is all the while blissfully unconscious of having spoken any thing except the most scriptural and Catholic truths. Then again the abolition, soon after Wilson's days, of the peculiar and insular exemptions, jurisdictions, and usages which had belonged to Man, tended no doubt to obliterate Wilson's work, which had found its opportunity and force mainly in the exceptional circumstances of the diocese. The emasculated ecclesiasticism into which the English dioceses had sunk invaded Man soon after the middle of the eighteenth century; and "no wonder if the more earnest of the flock caught somewhat too eagerly at an apparent revival of the sort of sympathy they were longing for, though it came in another form and from another quarter." Yet even so we can scarce think the phenomenon in question adequately accounted for. We are not sure that the records of Wilson's administration do not suggest the idea that the discipline was rather laid on the people *ab extra* than rooted in their personal convictions and interwoven with their principles. That they willingly submitted to it is clear; but was it not rather because Wilson imposed it than because they themselves understood and valued it? They would seem to have



been in many respects unprepared for Wilson's system, and therefore it took no root in them. For Church discipline, like personal asceticism, is no end in itself, nor is it wholesome *ex opere operato*. If it do not, through its severities, enlighten and stimulate the conscience of the penitent, it is rather apt to harden than to convert, and to serve to an unspiritual mind as a kind of substitute for real compunction. Wilson applied the discipline vigorously, and could by his authority secure outward observance of its terms. But he could not in person supply to the whole diocese that individual treatment of penitents without which the white sheet and the public confession are unavailing for spiritual health, and he had scarce any coadjutors able to second effectually his own efforts in this department. We wonder, too, whether his manifest shortcomings in the æsthetic and ritual sides of Churchmanship had any thing to do with his fleeting hold, for practical purposes, on the Manx mind. Mr. Keble has more than once to note the good Bishop's deficiencies in these particulars, which, however, are of course only the confessed deficiencies of his age. The churches and buildings Wilson was instrumental in erecting are, if possible, more ugly than their date would lead one to expect; and there is not one symptom throughout his career that the clear and firm hold he himself had on Catholic truth, and enforced by dint of authority and logic on others within his reach, had any tendency to embody itself in reverent and rich yet sober ceremony and usage. And yet this element, always important to creatures constituted as we are, is especially so to the



less learned and cultivated of us. The Manxmen were religious, but they would be a striking exception to the usual rule as to a somewhat rude race if their religion did not yearn after outward and visible expression, and this Wilson's system did not apparently supply. The faith which can sit altogether loose to external forms and symbols belongs only to highly cultivated intellects; and those, too, intellects of superior power and originality.

Wilson's work, so carefully set forth in these volumes, will make the modern Churchman often recur in his own mind to the question of the revival of Church discipline in our day and country. The speedy downfall of the system he set up in Man is, if fairly considered, no just argument against such revival. It may be that he used the outward appliances of the Church's discipline far more extensively than was warranted by the inner working of the Church's doctrine. The two assuredly should go hand in hand; nay, discipline will only grow and flourish when deeply rooted in faith and knowledge of the doctrine. But then, on the other hand, sound teaching, especially in its practical applications, loses a most powerful authentication and support when not pointed and vindicated, where necessary, by wholesome discipline. Authoritative discipline stands to the practical life much as ritual does to faith; and both discipline and ritual are important, indeed essential, for much the same sort of reasons;—those, namely, which arise from our consisting of body as well as of mind. There can be no doubt that the question of the restoration of Church discipline is a



very urgent one. The legislative enactments of Bishop Wilson's days have made such restoration hard to reconcile with the continued union of Church and State, at least in its present form; and it may be that a revision and modification of the terms of that union will be brought about through the endeavours of Churchmen to regain for the Church her ancient powers for good. Any how, it is plain enough that the utter abeyance of discipline, and the reduction of the Church's office to little more than one of mere good advice and remonstrance, is abundantly mischievous. Mr. Keble's volumes will furnish much valuable matter for thought to those whose minds are turning towards these questions.

In another particular our own days seem to be running into an evil opposite to that which beset Bishop Wilson's. It may be that a neglect of the outward guise of religious truth was amongst the shortcomings of that good man, as it was unquestionably of his contemporaries. It may be that, had there been given him, as there often is not to hard, sharp, and practical intellects, a perception of the vast importance of this element, he would have left his mark for good more durably on the scene of his protracted and self-denying labours. But let us in our generation be sure, on the other hand, that ritual and ceremony will never serve as a substitute for definite teaching of the Catholic truth in our ministers, intelligent apprehension of it by the people, and unswerving profession of it in both. The outward trappings of Catholicity may be readily assumed by the spurious and counterfeit "Churches" about us which compass town and hamlet to make one proselyte. The



collects, the canticles, and the liturgies of Fathers and Bishops may be purloined for the purposes of Salem Chapel. The priestly garments may, by a sort of spiritual felony, be donned by those whose very existence as a denomination arises out of a denial of the priestly office. Conventicles of ultra-gothic structure are rising around us in ludicrous inconsistency with the transactions which are to go on within them. If we lay an exclusive, or even excessive, stress on architecture and ritual, we rest our claims on those parts of our case which are most easily simulated; and expose ourselves again from an opposite quarter to the danger which has been sometimes incurred by our Evangelical brethren, of making the Church so like Dissent that to the vulgar, ever unapt to distinguish, there seems nothing to choose betwixt them. Catholic truth, in combination with Catholic ritual and circumstance, can be found in one society alone. Steady teaching of the one to the understanding, steady presentation of the other to the senses, in the decent moderation of the Church of England, cannot fail to win and keep our people within the safe fold.



## ESSAY VI.

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*Life of the Right Rev. Daniel Wilson, D.D., late Lord Bishop of Calcutta, and Metropolitan of India.* By the REV. JOSIAH BATEMAN, M.A., his Son-in-Law and First Chaplain. Two Vols. Murray.

*Primary Charge of the Bishop of Calcutta.* Calcutta: Bishop's College Press.

*Bishop Wilson's Journal Letters, addressed to his Family during the first nine Years of his Indian Episcopate.* Edited by his Son, DANIEL WILSON, Vicar of Islington. Nisbet and Co.

THE name of Daniel Wilson will call up in the minds of our readers reflections of a very mixed character. He was, and gloried in being, forward as a leader of a theological party within our Church; and, as must always be the case with such, received in no measured terms censure from his adversaries, and encomium from his friends. Yet we are sure that few Churchmen, be their peculiar shade of views what it may, will fail to find common sympathies and common interests with one whose personal piety was deep and fervent, if somewhat wanting in breadth; whose Churchmanship was sincere, honest, and even intense, though decidedly sectarian in tone; and whose whole conduct, with all its shortcomings, was full of zealous endeavour to act out principles which he sincerely and consistently held.



Few also will grudge a grateful acknowledgment of the vast services rendered to the Church by Bishop Daniel Wilson in one of her widest and most difficult fields of labour. The work which met him in India was one which required and stimulated the natural vehemence and positiveness of his character; and, human nature being what it is, if Wilson had had fewer faults, he would have probably achieved fewer successes. He was not of "the singular few"—

Who, gifted with predominating powers,  
Bear yet a temperate will.

On the contrary, he was often arbitrary, and sometimes very unjust to those who differed with him. Such failings, however, were but the wrong side of his very excellences, and were far better for the Church to bear, especially in such a sphere as India, than the vacillation of purpose and feebleness of rule which might have been, while men are what they are, expected but too probably from a Bishop of larger intellectual gifts and more liberal views. The Church in India demands pre-eminently—at least, evidently did so when Daniel Wilson assumed the chief government of her—a strong and resolute ruler. It must not be forgotten also that the conflict between Christianity and heathenism dwarfs, in a manner exceedingly difficult for us at home adequately to realize, the controversies which agitate a settled Christian community. In private life we see those who have no natural distresses and anxieties sedulously manufacturing for themselves artificial ones. And so it is with a flourishing and a peaceful Church. The Church in her missionary walks cares comparatively little about minor degrees and differences of opi-



nion amongst those who are all of them her true and attached sons. Hence Wilson stood, we think, higher in the estimation of Churchmen of all kinds in India than he did at home. He impressed us in England, whether in person or through his Charges and sermons, chiefly in the character of a somewhat intolerant, and even coarse, partisan; but the Church in India knew him also as the uncompromising champion of her rights, interests, and dignities against the civil and military powers, which more than once threatened during his Episcopate to reduce her to an entire and helpless dependence—as the friend whose purse was never spared when any of her numerous necessities presented itself, and whose unsparing exhortations, thus backed by example, produced an outflow of liberality which quite changed the aspect of her missionary stations—as the chief pastor, to whom, not less than to his lamented predecessor, Heber, might be justly applied the title of “first missionary in India;” who was incessantly on Visitation throughout his vast diocese, cheering the scattered labourers of Christ, and leaving behind him wherever he had passed new life and hope in the Churches; whose homely rebukes, if they sometimes lighted amiss on those whose allegiance to the Gospel and the Church was as genuine as the Bishop’s own, and sometimes were directed against trifles which it would have been more dignified quietly to discountenance, were also addressed with primitive boldness into quarters in which they were urgently called for, and denounced with a holy disregard of persons and of consequences the crying sins and follies of the lax social system of India.



But we have, almost unawares, been speaking of Daniel Wilson as Bishop of Calcutta, somewhat forgetting that the biography before us traces his life up to his very childhood.

He sprang originally from that class which has given so many illustrious names to our annals, and which has, to say the least, exhibited its full share of those qualities which we are apt to think especially characteristic of our nation—vigorous independence of character, and capacity for rising in the world—we mean the class of well-to-do yeomen. His father belonged to a junior offshoot of a Derbyshire family of this description, which had settled in London, and acquired considerable wealth in the Spitalfields silk trade. The future Bishop was apprenticed at an early age to an uncle in the same line of business; and neither at school nor in the early days of his apprenticeship does he seem to have exhibited any decided promise of future eminence. He lay, indeed, for a time under the baleful shadow of the infidelity, and consequent looseness of morals, which were then (1796) fashionable, and underwent at eighteen years of age that metamorphosis of character which is known as “conversion,” and is regarded by some of his school of opinion as essential:—

One evening (he says) I was as usual engaged in wicked discourse with the other servants in the warehouse, and religion happening (humanly speaking, I mean) to be started, I was engaged very warmly in denying the responsibility of mankind, on the supposition of absolute election, and the folly of all human exertions, where grace was held to be irresistible. (I can scarcely proceed for wonder that God should have upheld me in life at the moment I was cavilling and blaspheming at His sovereignty and grace.) We have a



young man in the warehouse whose amusement for many years has been entirely in conversing on the subject of religion. He was saying that God had appointed the end—He had also appointed the means. I then happened to say that I had none of those feelings towards God which he required and approved. “Well, then,” said he, “pray for the feelings.” I carried it off with a joke, but the words at the first made some impression on my mind, and thinking that I would still say that “I had done all I could,” when I retired at night I began to pray for the feelings. It was not long before the Lord in some measure answered my prayers, and I grew very uneasy about my state.—Vol. i. p. 8.

In this part of his life we shall not follow his biographer’s somewhat tedious details. We would only point to the fact that the London apprentice, from the above slight occasion, entered suddenly, with bitter penitence and humiliation for the past, and earnest struggles after light and grace, on that course of self-discipline and hard study which led him, eventually, to the Metropolitan throne of India. The case is remarkable enough; and while we protest against the error of those who regard sudden conversion as all-important, and as the only sure warrant for Christian confidence, it may teach us that such spiritual revolutions, however sudden, are sometimes genuine and real, and that they may even be perhaps God’s not least frequent mode of dealing with men.

It is not surprising that in this frame of mind a desire should soon have manifested itself towards holy orders. After some difficulties with his parents, who very properly required some evidences of stability in his purposes before approving of them, he was at last permitted to prepare himself for Oxford, and was matriculated at St. Edmund Hall in 1798. He had



many difficulties to contend with. His father allowed him but a hundred guineas per annum for his college expenses; which, however, he contrived to make suffice. The college records show that his battels averaged about 8s. per week. "Not once," says his biographer, "does the word debt appear directly or indirectly in his letters or journal." He was very backward in classical learning, but soon repaired this deficiency by determined diligence, supported by his robust health. Rising at half-past five in the morning, he allowed himself but one hour in the day for exercise, and passed for the six years of his student life about twelve hours of every day in hard study. The state of religion in the University at that time would seem to have been deplorable indeed. Mr. Bateman gives an illustration which speaks volumes:—

A most accomplished member of St. John's, an excellent scholar, and one who was deemed a model of an undergraduate of those days, not only never read his Bible, but did not possess one. Being remonstrated with by a friend, his rejoinder was, "How can I help it? Do you think that I could by any possibility go into Parker's shop and ask for a Bible?"—Vol. i. p. 50.

In such a society those who made any profession of religion were marked men; and Wilson, with a circle of like-minded friends at the Hall—some of whom have since been widely known in the Church (as, e. g., Dr. Marsh, Archdeacon Spooner, and Dean Pearson, of Salisbury)—acted up to all the observances of the "most straitest sect" of Evangelicalism. This part of his biography records meetings for prayer, reading of Scripture, mutual exhortation, &c.; and we find him



on one occasion sorely wounded in conscience because he had "sat an hour at tea, and did not introduce spiritual discourse." The opportunities of demonstrating their acquirements then afforded by the University to undergraduates were but few. There were no "Honours," and the Examination for degrees was little better than a form, if not a farce. But Wilson gained one of the University prizes, the English Essay, finding a congenial subject in "Common Sense." It is interesting to recall the fact that when he had recited his Prize Essay at the Commemoration he was followed on the rostrum by Heber, who that year gained the prize for his English poem on "Palestine." Wilson was ordained in 1801, and served for nearly two years as curate at Chobham, in Surrey, under the well-known Richard Cecil. He was not, however, forgotten at Oxford; and in 1803 he returned to the University as Vice-Principal of St. Edmund Hall. His promotion was speedily followed by his marriage. This connexion proved in every way a fortunate one. Daniel Wilson, though by no means what is called a domestic character, would seem to have had a large share of domestic blessings showered on his path. His father-in-law bought in 1801, for 5000*l.*, and bequeathed to him, the living of Islington. This valuable piece of ecclesiastical property still remains in the family, and metropolitan Churchmen can testify that the spirit of the Bishop still governs the exercise of the rights pertaining to it.

Wilson's tenure of office at Oxford lasted for more than eight years. There is little of general interest



in what is narrated of it. He discharged his academical duties with his accustomed energy, and the Hall thrived under his management. The characteristics which marked his rule in a larger sphere are discernible enough in his government of the little Hall at Oxford. "He was very strict in the enforcement of University regulations upon others, and in the observance of them himself. He was almost the last man who wore bands, and thus obtained for himself the *sobriquet* of 'Bands Wilson.'" Notwithstanding his "donnishness," he cultivated social intercourse with his pupils, and introduced those "religious tea-parties" so long associated in Oxford with St. Edmund Hall. These *triste* festivities, as our Oxford readers of some little standing will be well aware, survived by many years Wilson's connexion with Oxford; and, indeed, still perhaps flourish in one or two congenial quarters of the University, though we suspect that their native place now knows them no more,—or has them, if at all, in a theological spirit far other than that of Daniel Wilson.

In 1809 Wilson was selected by Cecil as his successor at Bedford Chapel. This place of worship occupied a conspicuous position in London for many years as one of the strongholds of the Evangelical party in our Church. Its origin and destruction are worth recording:—

St. John's Chapel was built in the reign of Queen Anne and the days of Dr. Sacheverel. It stood upon ground belonging to the trustees of Rugby School, and within the boundaries of the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn. The tradition is, that the Queen, looking



favourably on Dr. Sacheverel, and desirous of promoting him, sent for the patron of the rectory of St. Andrew's, which was then vacant, in order to express her wish that the Doctor should be appointed rector. The presentation belonged to the noble family of Montagu, now merged, by the marriage of the heiress, in the Dukedom of Buccleuch and Queensbury. Some intimation of the Queen's purpose having transpired, a "clerk" was selected, and duly appointed, before her Majesty's summons was obeyed, and her wish expressed; and then with courteous words the impossibility of compliance was pleaded. Queen Anne, however, was not to be so baffled. The newly appointed rector was made a bishop. This not only vacated the living, but placed the next appointment at the disposal of the Crown. It was instantly conferred upon Dr. Sacheverel, and he lived and died rector of St. Andrew's. Some of the citizens were greatly offended at the appointment, and, as a safety-valve against the pressure of High Church doctrines, combined, and built St. John's Chapel in Bedford-row. If this was indeed its mission, it has been accomplished; and now the place which once knew it, knows it no more.

One Thursday evening in November, 1856, when the verger was about to ring the bell and summon the congregation for the usual week-day evening service, he could produce no sound. Still many were assembled, and divine service proceeded: but when the minister ascended the pulpit, he perceived, from signs not to be mistaken, that the whole of the immense and massive roof had shifted and sunk, and might at any instant crush him and the whole congregation. A very short sermon naturally, and most wisely, followed this discovery: and that was the last sermon preached in a chapel where the *truth as it is in Jesus* had been so long and so faithfully held forth by a succession of able and pious ministers.—Vol. i. pp. 171, 172.

Proprietary chapels involve many very unsatisfactory principles. Often they are, as was the one before us, the fruits of party feeling, and they very obviously tend to perpetuate it. They have helped to loosen the ties between parishioners and their parish church, and so to bring about that disorganization of the parochial



system which unhappily exists in our large towns. Their multiplication has served as a sort of substitute for that subdivision of our enormous metropolitan parishes, and increase of parish churches, which are the proper and only adequate remedies for the spiritual destitution of London, or of any other large town. We have too often built proprietary chapels, and excused ourselves from the efforts necessary to do the Church's work in the Church's way. Very properly are they called chapels rather than churches; for their ministers are rather preachers than pastors. Their audiences consist simply of the renters of pews, bound to their ministers by no tie except mere preference—i. e. their arrangements are substantially and in principle those of Dissent. Doubtless, however, they have had the reluctant approval of our Bishops as the only means at hand, though not the best, of meeting the difficulties by which we are surrounded; and Wilson's management of St. John's proves that large opportunities of ministerial usefulness may be found even under the unfavourable circumstances which surround a proprietary chapel. One fact deserves to be repeated here, to the credit of Wilson's churchmanship. He was succeeded, not immediately, but while the congregation remained in substance as Wilson had made and left it, by Mr. Baptist Noel. Notwithstanding the popularity and influence which Mr. Noel enjoyed, he was followed in his secession from the Church by not more than twenty of the congregation of St. John's.

Though Wilson had no parochial charge, there was a good deal of machinery of various kinds attached to



the chapel. There were, amongst other things, large Sunday-schools conducted by members of the congregation; and the first District Visiting Society was established, we are told, in connexion with it. He took charge of the candidates for Confirmation furnished by families attending on his ministry, and on one occasion presented to the Bishop no less than 375 of them. He took a leading part in the formation of the Lord's Day Observance Society and the Church Missionary Society, and an active share in the management of most other similar bodies in the metropolis. The collections made for charitable purposes during his ministry at the proprietary chapel were extraordinary, often exceeding 200*l.* on a single occasion. Above all, his connexion with the "Clapham Sect" was there consolidated, and the way thus paved for his subsequent advancement:—

• Amongst the regular attendants were John Thornton and his sons—names suggestive of singular goodness and beneficence. There sat Charles Grant with his family, and two distinguished sons, the one, afterwards as Lord Glenelg, President of the Board of Control, and Secretary of State for the Colonies; the other as Sir Robert Grant, Governor of Bombay. There also sat Zachary Macaulay, accompanied by his son, the legislative counsellor of India and historian of England; ennobling literature, and now ennobled by it. Dr. Mason Good was there; a physician of high repute, the master of seventeen languages, and translator of the Psalms and the Book of Job, who from a disciple of Belsham, was now "sitting at the feet of Jesus." Near him might be seen Mr. Stephen and his family, Mr. Cardale, Mr. Bainbridge, Mr. Wigg, Mr. Charles Bridges, and many others of high repute and piety. Lawyers of note, also, who afterwards adorned the bench, were pew-holders in St. John's. The good Bishop Ryder often attended, and Lord Calthorpe, Mr. Bowdler, the "*facile princeps*," as he was termed, of



the rising barristers of his day, and Sir Digby Mackworth. Mr. Wilberforce was frequently present, with his son Samuel, "to take care of him." The late Duchess of Beaufort, also, often sought to hear him, with many members of her family. Individuals of every "sort and condition" were thus assembled—high and low, rich and poor, one with another. Thirty or forty carriages might often be counted during the London season, standing in triple rows about the doors; and though there was, as is too often unhappily the case in proprietary chapels, but scant accommodation for the poor, yet they loved to attend, and every vacant sitting-place was filled by them the moment the doors were opened.—Vol. i. p. 178.

It is this part of his life which gives the highest idea of Wilson's powers. His health was unimpaired; his industry inexhaustible; his personal influence great, and unsparingly exercised; his pulpit eloquence at its zenith:—

Those who have known him in the decline of life, or those even who have only known him in Islington, have no idea of his power in the pulpit of St. John's. In the decline of life peculiarities often crept into his discourses; and in Islington local and parochial matters were frequently introduced: there was nothing of the kind at St. John's. There was a seriousness in his manner, before which levity shrank abashed; an occasional vehemence, which swept all obstacles before it; a pathos and a tenderness which opened in a moment the fountain of tears; and a command which silenced for a time the mutterings of unbelief.

His literary labours, his journeys on behalf of various societies, and the controversies in which, during these years, as, indeed, throughout his life, he was hotly engaged, we must not dwell upon. In 1824 he underwent a very severe and tedious illness, and on his recovery found himself, by the death of the incumbent, in possession of the family preferment of Islington. We must pass over the eight years he spent there very briefly. The parish had been in the care of a "fine



specimen of the old school of divines," but was, as Mr. Bateman considers, "asleep." It was soon thoroughly stirred by Wilson's restless energy; and after considerable agitation, and some resistance, subsided and stiffened down into the decided Evangelical contour which its uncompromising vicar was resolved it should wear. "Religion became prominent," observes Mr. Bateman, "and worldliness drew back complaining and murmuring—'There is no such thing as getting a comfortable game at cards now, as in Dr. Strahan's time.'"

In one respect all will admit his merits. No sooner had he entered on his new charge than, finding the one church there was in Islington wholly inadequate to the wants of the population, he at once set himself to work, and during the first years of his incumbency built three new churches, obtaining for them from one source or another no less than 35,000*l*.

His connexion with India commenced in a somewhat curious manner. Turner, the fourth Bishop of Calcutta, visited Islington on his appointment in 1829, and requested suggestions from Wilson, as an experienced and devoted clergyman, respecting his duties in India. Wilson's thoughts were thus turned towards the East. On Bishop Turner's death, but a few months after he had reached his diocese, Wilson manifested great anxiety to secure the appointment of a good successor, and corresponded on the subject with his friend Charles Grant, then President of the Board of Control. The bishopric was offered to several eminent clergymen, and by them declined. Wilson at last, after various other suggestions, took the singular and characteristic



step of offering himself, and, after some delay and difficulty, was appointed in 1832. He found Church matters in his immense diocese either in utter confusion, or in the less complicated but even less satisfactory condition of simple non-existence. Wilson's two immediate predecessors had occupied the see but a few months—we might almost say weeks—each; and before them the lamented Heber, who succeeded Middleton, the first Bishop, not much longer. The diocese itself comprised the enormous territory now divided amongst no less than sixteen Indian, Australian, and Polynesian Episcopates. No wonder that the establishment of the bishopric had “not been attended with its full effects.” The vast palace at Calcutta, provided by the Government, was a blank. “When the Bishop arrived he found just so many chairs and tables ordered in from the bazaar as sufficed to make the noble rooms look miserable. ‘Why is this?’ he asked of Archdeacon Corrie, to whom he had written from England, requesting him, without limit, to provide such things as were needful. ‘I thought, my lord, that there was enough to last for six months,’ was the reply of the Archdeacon. He had acted with all simplicity, on the impression produced by past sad experience, and had not admitted the idea that life would be prolonged more than six months.” Wilson was the very man to bring all this into order. The palace was at once “completely and handsomely” furnished. The sixty or seventy servants “designated by a simple and appropriate livery.” The “silver sticks appertaining to his rank, and left by his predecessors, were put into



the hands of his Hurkaru and Chobdar, and generally used." And the Bishop was not less zealous in taking on himself his spiritual authority than in surrounding himself with the "pomp and circumstance" of it. The times, indeed, were against him. In those days (1832) the whole constitutional *status* of our Bishops was threatened. The enemies of the Church were bold; her friends were timid. Prime Ministers were bidding the Bishops set their house in order. It was not a period when a Bishop of Calcutta might expect to receive much consideration, or to meet with support either from Government or public opinion in making the authority of his office felt. But all this did not deter Wilson. No sooner had he landed than he found himself involved in a question of jurisdiction with the Presidency chaplains, who refused to recognize the Bishop's authority in his own cathedral. The clergy had been used to act independently, and to look to Government for guidance and indulgence. "They had yet," says Mr. Bateman, "to find they had a Bishop." This lesson they were soon taught. The chaplains were in no sense incumbents, but merely stipendiaries acting under the authority of Government, and by the Bishop's licence, and were consequently removable from place to place at a moment's notice. The cancelling of the licence was an obvious step; it was without hesitation taken by Wilson, and at once left the rebellious chaplains without powers, and entirely *hors de combat*. On his jurisdiction being admitted, the Bishop, having thoroughly vindicated his office, restored the chaplains to their functions.



We must not follow him through the various matters which he had to contest with the Indian authorities, or with his refractory clergy. He was generally, if not always, right in his claims; and, judging from the success which attended him, not injudicious in prosecuting them. It is amusing enough to find Daniel Wilson having to defend himself to his friends, as his correspondence shows he had to do, against charges of extreme Churchmanship! Yet such allegations were not made without what must have seemed, to those who advanced them, strong semblance of reason. He issued a general circular, prohibiting the chaplains and missionaries from taking part in Divine service with ministers of other denominations. He showed great anxiety to give the churches in his diocese an ecclesiastical character, taking pleasure to see them provided with chancels, spires, &c., and contributing liberally himself towards such purposes. His reflections on the plan, which by noble self-sacrifice he at length found the means to carry out, for building the new cathedral at Calcutta, are worthy of note, as is also his description of the consecration:—

I figured to myself my beautiful spire, rising up two hundred and twenty feet—the fine deeply buttressed Gothic nave, chancel, and transepts, marking the massive grandeur of the Christian religion—the magnificent organ sounding out, “Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ”—my native presbyters, in their snow-white vestures, walking down the aisles, the Christian neophytes responding in the choir—and Jesus acknowledged as the Lord of all. As I drove to the cathedral at ten o’clock, the whole space around it was filled with carriages of all descriptions in the most picturesque groups. The clergy and laity were waiting my arrival, surrounded with multitudes of spectators. I made my way through them with



verger and pastoral staff; and then proceeded up the middle aisle to the communion-rails. The petition for consecration was then read. I assented; and then the procession began, repeating as usual the twenty-fourth Psalm. The other forms having been gone through, the morning service commenced, the organ leading superbly in the chants. Colonel Forbes was sitting near me. I turned to him and said, "How beautifully the voice is heard!" When I ascended the pulpit, there was all around me a sea of heads reaching to the doorway and outer steps. At the Communion, the thirty-five clergy kneeling at the rails, and the five ministering within, presented to my mind an overwhelming sight.—Vol. ii. p. 172.

These things, however, though we fear some of our brother Churchmen might have taken fright at them if ventured upon by any High Church Bishop at home, were surpassed by the Bishop's letter to the Government, on its being proposed to permit the various sects of Christians in India to be married by their own ministers. Although Mr. Bateman does not give this document, we remember to have seen it quoted in a very trustworthy and independent book, Mr. G. Campbell's *Modern India*; from which we give our readers the benefit of an extract, containing words of the Bishop's own:—

The ecclesiastical establishments of the Government are solely for the benefit of its own Christian servants, and certainly are not chargeable with any attempt to proselytize; but that their head has a sufficiently strong opinion of the position and privileges of an Establishment may be judged from a letter publicly addressed by the present Bishop of Calcutta to Government in this nineteenth century, when it was proposed to permit the various sects of Christians in India to be married by their own ministers, and he expressed his fear of the result "if a person calling himself a Dissenting minister is now, for the first time since England was a Christian nation, to stand in the place of the priest in holy orders, with the authority of a Divine commission derived through successive consecrations and ordinations from the apostolic ages."—P. 208.



We commend these sentiments of a thoroughly Evangelical Bishop to the consideration of those Churchmen amongst ourselves who especially look up to him as an authority. Such opinions we believe to have been general amongst those excellent men whom Wilson especially followed and revered; and it is worth the consideration of those who now repudiate them, whether they are doing so upon conscientious and deliberate conviction, or whether they may not, in the heat of controversy, and in the recoil from dangerous extremes, have come somewhat short of the right standard of Churchmanship, as they unquestionably do of the measure of it set by such men as Wilson. For we think that no candid reader of this biography would fail to mark the difference between his "Evangelicalism," and much that is now current as such. The former had its peculiarities, of course—its Shibboleths—as every school of opinion will always have, and many of them were odd and arbitrary enough;—but it was, after all, something of larger sympathies, more decidedly Church instincts, more generous, more liberal-minded, than a large section of that which now claims the same name. It has been often said that Simeon, Cecil, Wilberforce, and others would have been High Churchmen had their minds been formed within the last thirty years. The assertion is one which does not admit of proof; yet certainly, when they are claimed by some of our contemporaries as their fathers in the faith, the legitimacy of the descent seems sometimes very questionable.

Not the least interesting of Wilson's ecclesiastical conflicts was the one he had with the Church Missionary



Society. The missionaries of that Society had indeed officiated in India since Heber's time with the Bishop's licence; but his authority over them was uncertain and undefined. Wilson soon found that their Society was setting up in his diocese a spiritual *imperium in imperio*, and keeping it moreover in lay hands. Mr. Bateman's account of the quarrel, which lasted for three years, and threatened at one time to lead to the secession of the Bishop and his friends from the Society, is not of the clearest. He passes over this ugly and inconvenient chapter in the history of the great Evangelical missionary institution as smoothly as may be; but the general nature of the points at issue can be tolerably well made out. The Society expected the Bishop to license its nominees as a matter of course, without question asked or reason given; thus reducing his functions to a mere form. The Corresponding Committee at Calcutta actually went so far as to set the Episcopal office entirely at nought, and to appoint missionaries without the recognition of the Bishop at all! Not satisfied with this, the Society denied to the Bishop all power of Visitation as regards its missions, and all jurisdiction over its stipendiaries in India! The remark of Archdeacon Corrie, as regards the men under whose influence these pretensions were put forward, is weighty, and has a wide application:—"When an object spiritually good in their view comes before them, they care little whether it be attained by the rules of the Church of England, or by any other." At length, by the mediation of friends, the breach was healed. The point of superintendence was conceded to the Bishop,



and that of licensing compromised. The rule of the Society on the latter point now appears to be to submit its ordained Missionaries for licence to the Bishop of the Diocese in which they may be stationed, and then, in Bishop Wilson's own words, "the Bishop expresses by granting or withholding his licence, in which the sphere of the missionary's labour is mentioned—his approbation or otherwise of that location." Certainly the terms of the concordat are by no means too favourable to the Episcopal power. It would seem that the Society still possesses, though it do not exercise, the power of stationing its servants in any part of a colonial diocese it may think proper.

Mr. Bateman's narrative of the seven Visitations accomplished by the Bishop during his long Episcopate is in parts most interesting; especially so that of the first Visitation, on which the writer attended on the Bishop as chaplain. The gorgeousness and luxuriance of the tropical scenery, and the strangeness of the men and the manners he encountered, warm Mr. Bateman's naturally somewhat stiff and bald style of writing into eloquence; and the incidents of this first Visitation are given with a freshness and vivacity which is wholly wanting in most parts of the work. One incident which befell the Bishop is sufficiently amusing:—

Hurry Holkar held a Durbar to receive the Bishop with due honour. A little before sunset the party proceeded to the town and palace, on five huge elephants, covered with most gorgeous trappings, which had been sent for them. Swarms of Mahratta cavalry were in attendance, commanded by one of Holkar's sons. The procession was characterized by all sorts of frantic demonstrations—the shouts of the people, the galloping of horses, firing of



pistols, and clouds of dust. The armed camels formed a striking feature in it. On the back of each a swivel gun is mounted, and when calm they march in ranks. But now, whether partaking of the excitement, or frightened at it, they defied alike their riders and their nosebits, and were galloping wildly over the plain. A galloping camel is a strange sight. In vain the rider pulls back the head and lays it on the hump; the animal still pursues his headlong, or rather headless, career. Nothing brings him to his senses but fierce blows upon the nostrils thus brought within the reach of the rider. Long avenues led into the town. Wild peacocks were grouped upon the trees, and hunting leopards chained to many of the doors; the populace poured out into streets straight and wide, from houses handsome and well built, by thousands and tens of thousands. At length the palace was reached, and at the top of a narrow and somewhat shabby staircase Holkar received his guests, shook hands, and led them to the Durbar. In this case no seats were provided, and all were obliged to sit as best they could. Conversation was rapid, and was enlivened, but not interrupted, by music and dancing. In about half an hour all rose to leave. Then followed the bedizenment with flowery wreaths around the head, neck, and wrists, which was smiled at and submitted to, as a matter of etiquette. But the Bishop winced when Holkar rubbed a whole handful of oily attar over the front of his best dress-coat, and was evidently in despair when the anointing was followed by a shower of rose-water. In vain he afterwards rubbed, and was rubbed; the visit to Holkar cost him a suit of clothes. The Vizier was more merciful to his suite, and a little persuasion averted the compliment. But all alike bore off the wreaths of flowers, and, on arriving at the Residency, presented any thing but a clerical appearance.—Vol. ii. pp. 93, 94.

Mr. Bateman's narrative, especially in this part of it, is aptly supplemented by the recent publication of a large selection from the Bishop's letters. Those letters only have been given which had not been already quoted in the biography. They were thrown off rapidly as events occurred; and addressed as they were to members of his family, they convey with no little



freedom and vigour his first fresh impressions of India and Missionary work during the earlier days of his episcopate.

The vastness of the territories assigned to the superintendence of Wilson is strikingly displayed by the summary given of this Visitation :—

And thus ended the longest Visitation, perhaps, on record. The outlines of British India had been well-nigh traced. The confines of Burmah, China, Thibet, Caubul, had been nearly touched. The Ganges, Sutlej, Brahmapootra, Cavery, and Nerbudda rivers had been crossed or navigated. Commenced on August 25th, 1834, it concluded (with two intervals rendered necessary by the climate) on March 14th, 1837. Two years and a half were thus occupied, and more than thirteen thousand miles traversed by sea and land.—Vol. ii. p. 138.

The Episcopate in India is beset with other difficulties than those arising from climate and extent of territory. Some of these are common to all, or nearly all, missionary work amongst the heathen—e. g. those arising from polygamy; but there are others peculiar to India. Not the least is caused by the system of caste, against the retention of which amongst the converts Wilson first made a decided stand. The social institutions of India are a highly organized scheme, which has for ages been inwrought into the daily life of 150 millions of civilized people; and caste is the very basis of them all. The demand first peremptorily insisted on by Wilson that caste should be utterly renounced in the native Churches is undoubtedly a serious—humanly speaking, a fatal—obstacle to the success of missionary work in India. It places Christianity at an enormous disadvantage—far greater than any it would seem ever to have had to



surmount elsewhere. In primitive times nothing is more noteworthy than the care and judgment with which the new doctrine was withheld from direct intermeddling with the institutions, whether social or domestic, of the society into which it was introduced—however alien those institutions might be from its spirit—as, for instance, slavery was. What was faulty was left to be abolished or ameliorated spontaneously by the new motives which Christianity brought with it. And thus was the heathen world renewed and transfigured, it knew not how, until it had by unmarked degrees grown into the holier and kindlier life of a Christian people. It must be henceforward far otherwise in India. Christianity has declared internecine war against the whole social and domestic framework of native life. Every convert must in a manner embrace “counsels of perfection;” he must forsake “his father and his mother, and all that he has,” before he can be received as a disciple at all! The chapter which records Bishop Daniel Wilson’s visit to the mission stations of Southern India, where the caste system had been permitted to take root, and to establish itself, is most exciting. The Bishop was resolute; and in spite of opposition, which even threatened his personal safety, he assailed the mischief dauntlessly as usual, purged the Churches of it, and left them diminished in number, but settled on a better and a sounder basis. For we believe that no alternative was left him. The caste system is not merely social; it must not be compared, as it often is, to the different ranks and degrees of society. It is rooted deep in the first principles of Hindooism, and its



ramifications, its obligations, and its symbolism are religious throughout. We believe that the Apostles would no more have tolerated it than they would the partaking of an idol sacrifice, or the observance of heathen religious festivals. In India its retention was found, indeed, to facilitate the coming over of the natives to Christianity, but to afford, on the other hand, only too successfully, temptations to apostasy. It was eating out, not the vigour of spiritual life, but the very existence of it in the native Churches; and Wilson's determined measures with it, while they have, doubtless, retarded the general ingathering of the millions of India into the Church of Christ, have at all events secured that that conversion, when it is at last granted to the prayers of Christendom, will be a real and thorough one.

It is time that we should say something of the manner in which Mr. Bateman has discharged himself of his undertaking. Due allowance must be made for the partiality of a near and attached connexion, and when this is done, there will not be much left to complain of. In general the reader is left to form his own judgment. The countless letters of the Bishop which yet remain, his journals, his sayings and doings, form the staple of the book; and Mr. Bateman has supplied connecting matter, on the whole, of no very considerable amount. This is sometimes awkwardly put together, and consists largely of that bizarre mosaic of Scripture phrases in which some Evangelical writers think it pious and respectful to speak of one another, and which, if ever appropriate, certainly is so for em-



balming the memory of Daniel Wilson, who rejoiced in it as much as one of Sir Walter Scott's Puritans or Covenanters. To those whose religious life was quickened by Daniel Wilson's fervid piety, and to the wide circle which knew him personally as Bishop, adviser, or friend, the laborious and lengthy memoir before us will not seem tedious. But the general public will wish Mr. Bateman's extracts had been fewer, and the whole work condensed into half its present bulk. Yet those who read it—and every one may well do so who desires to know how a deeply sincere Christian man should live, and a devoted missionary Bishop labour—will not close it without sharing in some degree the author's respect and affection for the man whose life is thus thoroughly laid open. Wilson's Episcopate was not, indeed, very successful in a missionary point of view. But he has, partly from the length of time he was enabled to give to the work, but not less from his untiring zeal, his decision of character, his firm maintenance of the rights of the Church, and his attachment to ecclesiastical order and discipline, done for the future of Christianity in India more than any one other individual. To him belongs the chief credit of the subdivision of his immense diocese, and the erection of Calcutta into a Metropolitan see—a precedent which has since been advantageously followed in South Africa and Australia. Out of his large fortune, and the income of 5000*l.* a year which he received from the bishopric, he left behind him only 6000*l.* in all: his cathedral, his churches, his societies, his charities, had absorbed the rest. To him, more than to any other



individual, belongs the credit of having laid widely and deeply the main foundations of that goodly branch of the true Church of Christ in India, the fabric of which we look to those who follow him to rear. Well does he deserve the eulogium pronounced upon him by his successor in his clear-headed and sensible Primary Charge:—

Whatever could be done by consistent piety and princely munificence, that Daniel Wilson did for his diocese. This cathedral in which we are assembled to-day, with the missions and schools connected with it, the Additional Clergy and Church Building Societies (of which the latter has contributed to the erection of sixty-six churches), owe their origin entirely to his energy, and in a great degree to his unfailing liberality. Still more may we rejoice in the thought that for nearly twenty-six years this diocese enjoyed the benefit of his firm but gentle and eminently practical wisdom, his missionary zeal and Christian goodness. *They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them*; while we must unite together in the prayer and the effort that we may not be unworthy of those who have gone before us, but may do our part in carrying on the great work which they have left unfinished.



## ESSAY VII.

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*Calvin; his Life, Labours, and Writings.* Translated from the French of FELIX BUNGENER. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.

*The Reformation in Europe in the Time of Calvin.* By Dr. D'AUBIGNÉ. Vols. I. and II. Longmans.

*Institutes of the Christian Religion.* By JOHN CALVIN. A New Translation by HENRY BEVERIDGE, Esq. Two Vols. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.

A GREAT revolution will be found to comprise a period of destruction and an after-period of reconstruction; and each period will exhibit its master-minds and its leaders of men. That most momentous of all revolutions, or, to speak more correctly, that great series of revolutions, which we roughly speak of as "the Reformation," went of course through these two phases. To the first and earlier epoch belongs—in the Church of Germany, Luther; in that of Switzerland, Zuingli: to the latter epoch must be assigned Melancthon and Calvin, and Calvin pre-eminently.

A German thinker would easily philosophize the relations of these Protestant chiefs differently, though hardly inconsistently. Those relations have, for instance, been laid out, so to speak, on the platform of human nature itself; as if religion might be described as springing



out of the conscience, mounting next to the understanding, and reaching finally outwards into the life and habits, and through them into the connexion and intercourse of man with man. Viewing the matter thus, we might describe it as Luther's mission to rouse the conscience, and to guide men into the right path of peace; Zuingli's, to vindicate by appeal to reason and Scripture the Reformed doctrine, which would hinge, considered as against Romanism, on the tenet of justification by faith only; Calvin's, to renovate and regulate the life and conversation of the Christian professor, and to organize him with his fellows into a community which should stedfastly reproduce, socially and politically, what the Gospel of the Reformation had aimed to make him individually.

Such theories will not bear being pushed too far. Nevertheless they have a considerable modicum of verisimilitude about them, and serve conveniently to collocate and group the facts of the history. Calvin's work, whether in theology or ecclesiology, whether in doctrine or discipline, was a work of systematizing, development, and consolidation. It is not too much to say that he first gave a scientific existence to Protestant theology on the Continent; enabled the adherents of the Reformed Faith to realize distinctly and to formulate what they professed; and to stand before the world not merely in a negative and polemical character, but with a definite, compact, and logical system of belief, practice, and discipline. We do not mean that Calvin's organization of Continental Protestantism either proceeded altogether on right principles, or took



in no weak and false elements; much less can we endorse the absolute and exclusive claims made for his system by its author; and to English notions and ways Calvinism is assuredly but little congenial. But limiting our view to the Continental Reformation, and stating facts without reference to their attributes, the theory as to the relations of the great Reformers and their several labours may well stand in its main outlines as above indicated.

There is little in the life of Calvin of a striking and dramatic character, so far as outward events are concerned. He was born at Noyon, in Picardy, in the year 1509, the year of Henry VIII.'s accession to the throne of England. His father, Gerard Chauvin or Cauvin,—a name latinized after the manner of the time when the son became famous into Calvinus,—had become “apostolic notary, fiscal attorney of the county, proctor of the chapter, and secretary of the bishop, functions which were more honourable it appears than lucrative, especially for a man burdened with a numerous family. Gerard was favourably regarded by the nobility, by the clergy, and above all by the bishop, Charles de Hangest.” Bungener, p. 6. The father's opportunities pointed clearly enough to the vocation which should be chosen for some part at least of his family. John, always remarkable for the gravity and seriousness of his demeanour, was naturally destined for the Church. Gerard Chauvin accordingly availed himself of his favour with the nobility to procure for his son education along with the children of the noble house of Mommor. Finding the expense heavy, Gerard Calvin procured from the



bishop for the boy, then twelve years old, "a small office which happened to be vacant, that of chaplain to the chapel called the Gesine." An expedient of this kind was not uncommon in those days, and it is noteworthy as illustrating the abuses which had crept over the Church. Some years afterwards the father procured for Calvin, through the same influence and for the same purposes, the cure of Marteville, afterwards changed for that of Pont L'Evêque. Calvin received the tonsure in 1521; and appears more than once to have preached to his parishioners at Pont L'Evêque, that being the only pastoral function he could discharge, since he never took Holy Orders from the Romish Church. He was in due course sent to study at Paris, and there under Corderius laid the foundation of that clear and vigorous Latinity which afterwards distinguished him. At Paris, too, he was much in the society of Robert Olivetan, a fellow-countryman and a relative, who had early imbibed what were then termed "Lutheran" notions. Much uncertainty hangs over details; but it is probable that Calvin, hitherto a fervent and even bigoted Churchman, began from his discussions with Olivetan, and afterwards under Olivetan's advice and direction, to read the Scriptures for himself, and to be shaken in his allegiance to his old faith. He prosecuted, however, his studies with characteristic ardour and perseverance, and was noted as yet amongst the professors of his college as a student of rare promise. His life was even now pitched in the same tone and key which it retained to the end. He was austere and ascetic in his own habits, and unsparing



in his censures of youthful follies and faults in others. "Mirum in modum religiosus, et severus omnium in suis sodalibus vitiorum censor," says Beza, his first biographer and successor at Geneva. The appropriate *sobriquet* of "The Accusative" was bestowed on him by his fellow-students. At any rate he afforded example as well as precept. "It is a long time," it was said, "since Sorbonne or Montaigu had so pious a seminarist." "Absorbed in his books, he often forgot the hours for his meals and even for sleep. The people who lived in the neighbourhood used to show each other as they returned home in the evening a tiny and solitary gleam, a window nearly lit up all the night through." D'Aubigné, i. 518. About 1527, whilst pursuing his studies at Paris, and feeling the first impulses of that spiritual agitation which then was rapidly reaching one after another amongst the leading minds of his nation, he received from his father the order to lay aside divinity and to betake himself to jurisprudence. The motives for this change are not altogether clear. The law may have seemed then a surer road to wealth and honours; but it is more probable that the father desired to remove his son from Paris, and had hope that amidst different studies and new associates he might shake off the heretical tendencies which had begun to manifest themselves in him. At any rate he removed first to Orleans, where Pierre l'Etoile, better known as Petrus Stella, the acutest lawyer in France, and afterwards President of the Parliament of Paris, was lecturing; and afterwards to Bourges, to study under the celebrated jurist Alciati.



At Bourges he learned Greek from Melchior Wolmar, who had been imported by the munificence of Francis I. from Germany, as Alciati had been from Milan. The knowledge of Greek brought with it that of the Greek Testament; and this to Calvin, as to others, was like the opening of a new spiritual world.

At Bourges his leanings towards Lutheran views began openly to show themselves. The first effect of the new ideas which Olivetan and Wolmar had been instrumental in opening to him had been, as often was the case, merely to throw him more energetically into the exercises of piety prescribed by his Church. He rejected the new light as a temptation of Satan; he confessed himself more diligently, and sought to banish his misgivings and to allay his conscience by penances and alms-deeds. But an intellect like Calvin's could not be put off with expedients of this kind. His questionings, his smittings of conscience returned again; he had to bottom these matters for himself; and under the guidance of his Greek Testament he found at last peace of mind and satisfaction in a clear and firm grasp of the Protestant doctrine of Justification. No sooner had he attained to something like a settled state of mind, than he began to proclaim his settled convictions to others. He had already attracted so much attention by his application and learning, that we find him on occasion called on to supply the professor's place; and he was, amongst other foreign divines and jurists, asked his opinion on the then much canvassed divorce case of Henry VIII. At this juncture Calvin's father died, and he found himself at liberty thence-



forward to follow without interference the bent of his own inclinations. After visiting Noyon and settling the family affairs, he renounced for ever the legal studies, which left, however, deep and marked traces on his genius, his writings, and his conduct; theology took the final precedence of jurisprudence; the "science of God," said Calvin, "is the mistress science, the others are only her servants." And he returned in 1529 to Paris, the focus of the new life and light stirring in the nation.

He found the capital in profound agitation. There were to be seen "in the University quarter," says Dr. D'Aubigné, "the pupils of Daniel and Vatable, with the Hebrew or Greek Testaments in their hands, disputing with every body. 'It is thus in the Hebrew text,' they said; 'and the Greek reads so and so.'" Calvin, of course, "did not disdain polemics; following the natural bent of his mind, he attacked error and reprimanded the guilty." Paris was full of Lutheran congregations, gathering more or less in secret. The strength of the movement party had greatly and rapidly increased, and the Sorbonne had resorted to the weapon of persecution. There seemed, indeed, at the time every prospect that all attempts at suppression would fail; that France would openly espouse the cause of the Reformation, and even place herself at the head of the Protestant States in a crusade against the allied Imperial and Papal powers. The traditions of the past, not less than the political tendencies of the day, seemed to mark out a rôle of this sort for her. "Gallicanism," as opposed to "Ultramontanism," had in substance



made its appearance in the arena of French politics long before. The great University of Paris, under the guidance of Gerson, had more than a century ago adopted the principle that the Pope is subject to a General Council. Louis XII. but thirty years previously had cited Pope Julius II. before him, and had, in conjunction with the Emperor Maximilian, attempted to get together a General Council to reform the Church. Nay he had, in testimony of his thorough-going designs against the Papacy, caused money to be coined with the inscription, "Perdam Babylonis nomen." Of Francis I. great hopes were for many years entertained by the Reformers. Hereditary policy, as well as unmistakeable expediency, inclined him to favour the opponents of extreme Papal pretensions. Personally he was a splendid patron of learning, and that in those days went a long way towards identifying him with the friends of the Reformation. His sister Margaret of Valois, afterwards Queen of Navarre, a great favourite with him, made no secret of her attachment to the Reformed tenets, and protected and encouraged the pastors in every possible way. The sequel soon showed, however, that the king cared little for religion at all, and that the little care he had was not to be bestowed on the Reformed manner of it. Though he intrigued with the Reformed princes of Germany, lent them support in order to embarrass his rival Charles V., invited Melancthon to Paris, and professed great anxiety to discover means towards a peaceable and effectual remedy of abuses in the Church; yet finding ere long that the religious prejudices of the mass of his subjects



were decidedly Papal, and that his coquetting with the Protestants was becoming dangerous, he had no hesitation in whitewashing his character for orthodoxy by letting loose the doctors of the Sorbonne upon the Lutherans of his capital. Persecution grew hot soon after Calvin's return to Paris, and many were put to death. Calvin at this time published his first book, Seneca's treatise *De Clementiâ*, with a Commentary. It can hardly be doubted, when we consider the absorbing interest of religious questions at that time, Calvin's active share in the discussion of those questions, and the severities towards his friends which were being enacted continually before his eyes, what the motive was which suggested this little work. Calvin sought in a safe form to recall to the King and the Church authorities of the day the duty of toleration and mercy, and to shame them by exhibiting the larger-heartedness which even heathen philosophy inculcated. The book, however, produced no result whatever, except indeed that of involving Calvin in considerable pecuniary anxieties. Calvin's stay in Paris was cut short by a very curious incident. Nicholas Cop had been elected rector of the Sorbonne, and according to custom had to inaugurate his tenure of office by a sermon on All Saints' day. Cop was a friend of Calvin, had imbibed something of his views, and rashly accepted Calvin's offer to compose his discourse for him. Great was the astonishment and dismay of the doctors, instead of the time-honoured defence of the faith and denunciation of heretics, to hear from a chief seat of orthodoxy, in the Mathurins'



church, an unsparing onslaught on the merit of good works, and a fervent and lucid vindication of the Lutheran tenet of justification by faith only. An attack so audacious could not be overlooked. Cop had to fly instantly to Switzerland. Calvin's share in the business became known, or, at least, suspected, and "the parliament was glad of the opportunity which at last offered for arresting him. Warned in time, 'he escaped,' as Desmay relates, 'by a window, and ran to the St. Victor suburb, to a vinedresser's, and changed his clothes there.' Meanwhile the famous criminal lieutenant, Jean Morin, was searching his papers, which betrayed the names of several of his adherents. The greater part of them, like himself, were obliged to flee."—Bungener, p. 28.

This was in 1533. The affair however was, by the good offices of Margaret of Valois, allowed in time to drop; and after passing some time at her court at Nerac, Calvin in 1535 returned to Paris. The immediate occasion of his journey seems to have been to accept a challenge from Michael Servetus to dispute with him respecting the doctrine of the Trinity. Servetus had published at Hagenau, in 1531, his work "*De Trinitatis erroribus*," and in the year following his "*Dialogorum de Trinitate Libri Duo*." He had been for some years engaged in maintaining his positions on this mysterious doctrine against the leading Protestant Divines; and his selection of Calvin for an opponent is one amongst several proofs of the leading position which that Reformer was by this time acquiring. Servetus, whether from fear of his opponent, or, as is



more likely, of the Sorbonne, did not appear to take up his gage; and the two did not meet until Servetus some twenty years afterwards rashly placed himself in Calvin's power at Geneva.

Calvin's stay at Paris this time was but short. Persecution, suspended or greatly mitigated for a time, broke out again with fresh violence. It was, indeed, provoked by the imprudence of the Reformers. They had been let alone on the understanding that they would keep tolerably quiet. This condition the hot spirits among them neither could nor would observe. Speech being interdicted, they carried on the war against Popery by anonymous tracts and handbills. Morning by morning the streets were found placarded with little stinging theological squibs. On Oct. 18, 1535, they went so far as to post copies of "True Articles on the horrible and great abuses of the Papal Mass" on the walls of the Louvre, and even on the doors of the king's chamber. This violent and indecent proceeding is believed to have been mainly concocted by Farel, afterwards Calvin's leading ally in Switzerland. The consequences of it were terrible to the Protestants, and even fatal to their interests in France. The king, already irritated by their troublesomeness, seized at once the advantage thus given him against them, and hastened to respond to the exhortations of the Papal partisans. By way of extinguishing the ill odour he had contracted amongst Churchmen through allying himself with the German Protestants, the heretic King of England, and even "the Grand Turk," he broke out at once with merciless rigour upon the unhappy Pro-



testants of Paris. "On the 29th of January, 1535, a splendid procession issued from the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. That host which the Reformers outraged by persisting in calling it bread, was carried under a canopy, borne by the four chief dignitaries of the realm, the Dauphin, and the dukes of Orleans, Vendôme, and Angoulême. The king walked behind, bareheaded, with a torch in his hand, as if to make expiation for the kingdom. After mass, which was magnificently celebrated at St. Genevieve's, the king repaired to the episcopal palace, seated himself upon a throne prepared in the great hall, and surrounded by the clergy, and the nobility and parliament in their red robes, declared his intention of granting neither peace nor truce to him who should separate from the religion of the State. 'He had seen,' he said, 'the offence committed against the King of kings by the pestilent wickedness of those who would molest and destroy the French monarchy.' He was above all indignant that his good city of Paris, 'from time immemorial the head and pattern of all good Christians,' had not been sheltered from that pestilence; and, said he, 'it would be very absurd in us if we did not confound and extirpate these malignants, as far as in us lies.' He enjoined upon all to denounce whoever should belong to the malignants, even though a relative or a brother. Finally, 'As for me, who am your king, if I knew that one of my members was tainted or infected with this detestable error, not only would I give it you to lop it off, but if I were to perceive one of my children infected, I would sacrifice him myself.'



Philip II., therefore, who later on was to say as much, did but repeat Francis I. And the same day, by way of beginning, six fires, in six different parts of the town, consumed six men, taken almost indiscriminately from amongst those whom the king had just devoted to death. One only was decidedly more guilty than the rest, Antoine de la Force, the host and friend of Calvin. But the stake was not enough—must not the punishment, like the solemnity, be novel and extraordinary? The condemned, fastened to a long swinging beam, were to be plunged into the flames, then withdrawn, then plunged again, and then withdrawn once more. The king of France, like the ferocious Roman emperor, had wished that his victims should feel themselves die, and, moreover, he had determined to behold their tortures with his own eyes. As he returned to the Louvre he passed the six fires in succession; six times he saw the abominable swing at work, but he did not succeed in detecting any weakness or regret in the martyrs.”—Bungener, pp. 36—38.

From these horrors Calvin fled to Basle, and there made or renewed acquaintance with the leading Reformers—Capito, Œcolampadius, Bucer, Grynæus, and others. Here he continued about a year, and here he published the first edition of the great work on which his fame as an author and theologian in great part rests,—The Institutes of the Christian Religion. The earlier bibliographical history of the Institutes is in many respects uncertain and disputed. It cannot be determined, e. g. whether the work was originally written in Latin or in French, whether it appeared



anonymously or not, or whether in 1535 or 1536. The earliest extant edition is the Latin one of 1536. But the Sorbonne had issued a special order that the book should be burnt; and it is probable that this policy was so far successful as to have annihilated a French edition of 1535. The Institutes as thus given to the world were by no means the lengthy and elaborate work which we now have under the name. They were as yet little more than a manual or catechism, in which was systematically set forth the faith of those whom Calvin saw persecuted and defamed. It consisted of six chapters only, entitled respectively, "Of the Law," "Of Faith," "Of Prayer," "Of the Sacraments," "Of the Romish Sacraments," "Of Christian Liberty." Yet though thus of no great bulk, it was by far the most complete, comprehensive, and systematic exhibition of Protestant doctrine that had yet been seen; and was welcomed with an unprecedented enthusiasm by those of the reformed persuasion throughout Europe. Paulus Thurius, a Hungarian, salutes it after the manner of the time thus:

*"Præter Apostolicas post Christi tempora chartas,  
Huic peperere libro sæcula nulla parem."*

The services thus rendered to his co-religionists by Calvin are well indicated by M. Bungener: "Whether calumniated or not, whether called or not to say what they believed, the Reformed of France wished to be able to say it to themselves, not only article by article, which many could have done, but under the more satisfactory and solid form of a system, and as a whole. Not one of them had yet done or been



able to do this. The success of the Institutes in every Protestant country soon showed that the same need was felt every where, even where the faith was already officially settled. They wanted something more and something better than a confession of faith. They expected a book which should be a confession, but be accompanied by all that would be necessary to understand and defend it. The Institutes was that book. It gave to the new Church the definite feeling of its lawfulness, its rights, and its strength. By that clear and concise exposition of apostolic Christianity, that vigorous appeal to Scripture, and that haughty firmness in tracing the limits between human traditions and revealed truths, Calvin, in some sort, sealed with God's seal all that the Reformed faith had done, and started it in its new confidence towards the conquests which offered themselves to its zeal."—Bungener, p. 45.

The Institutes, thus auspiciously launched, ran through many editions; and Calvin for nearly a quarter of a century was more or less occupied in revising, perfecting, and expanding them. The first edition, as we have said, contained six chapters only. The next, that of Strasburg, bearing date 1539, numbered seventeen; that of 1543 has twenty-one; that of 1559 counts no less than eighty-four. There were, moreover, very many intermediate editions. Of the design of this great work, we must be content to say that it may be conceived as the application to dogmatic theology of the cardinal principle of Justification by Faith only, and the development of that principle in reference to the standing of the human soul as before the three



several Persons of the Blessed Trinity ; and, lastly, of the relations of the soul to its fellows and equals in the Communion of the Church. Hence in its final shape the Institutes consisted of four great parts or books treating, as M. Bungener describes, of “ The knowledge of God and of His creative work ; of Jesus Christ and of His redeeming work ; of the Holy Ghost and of His regenerating work ; and, finally, of the Church, the Body of Christ, the depository of the means of grace and salvation.”

Considered as the production of a young man of six and twenty the Institutes, even in the imperfect and rudimentary state in which they first appeared, have been probably to this day unmatched both in weight of matter and in excellence of style. Neither must we suppose that the fullest and latest edition contained any kind of a retraction or cancelling of what had appeared in the first, nor even any thing in the nature of new principles subsequently discovered and inserted. The smaller book was in germ and outline what the larger and later ones were in elaborate and expanded detail. Nothing that appeared in 1535 had been withdrawn in 1559, with the one significant exception of some strong passages on religious toleration, which the man who had done Servetus to death could not for shame's sake allow to stand ; but all was symmetrically and gradually unfolded, furnished with new illustrations, arguments, and applications, and eventually remodelled. We are not aware, indeed, that Calvin during his whole life ever, strictly speaking, retracted any thing he had once deliberately said or written.



His way was to think his subject-matter out with the utmost power of his mind ere he put it forth ; and once parted from him, it might acquire indeed new confirmation and receive uses at first undreamed of, but remained for ever to its author at least as true to the last as it had been from the first. The cream of the Institutes was, however, for the time found in the preface, which was addressed to Francis I. This striking composition formed the first great public act of Calvin's life ; the first open assumption of a lead which was afterwards so readily and all but universally conceded to him by those of his party. Not without reason has Mr. Dyer, Calvin's ablest English biographer, ranked this as one of the three most famous prefaces which the world has ever seen, that of Casaubon to Polybius, and of De Thou to his History, being the other two. The preface was, in fact, a formal apology for the reformed faith and its adherents ; and an indignant and even bitter remonstrance with the king of France on his cruelties towards them. "It has often been quoted as the first piece of literary eloquence possessed by the French tongue ; but to the Reformed it was not only the most eloquent pleading till then written in their behalf, it was the model, and, as it were, the programme of all the apologies they would have to write ; and, in fact, even at the present day the order followed by Calvin is that to which recourse is constantly had. The author's name was soon in every mouth, and unanimous testimonies of gratitude and admiration sought him out in his retreat at Basle. The Institutes had the success of every book called forth by



serious aspirations, giving a local habitation and a name to the thoughts which people the air, saying what every body thinks; such a book is every body's work, and every body is ready to praise it as his own. Many, nevertheless, were alarmed at having thought all this, and at being in their consciences accountable for a revolution so radically complete. Logically they could object nothing; it was what indeed flowed from principle, and no one could think of resisting the indomitable reasoner. But, and that is what was done by some timid ones, they could abandon the principle itself; they could proclaim themselves enlightened by the enormity of the consequences, and returned corrected into the old Romish track. But if the Institutes had this result in some, they became to many others the torch which came to illumine their thick darkness, the banner under which they were about to march, blessing God for having at last granted them to know where they were, and whither they were going."—Bungener, pp. 64, 65.

From Basle Calvin proceeded to the court of Ferrara, where the duchess Renée, daughter of Louis XII., king of France, was friendly both to learning and to the Reformation. As he was now a person of note, he found it convenient to travel under an alias, and called himself Charles d'Espeville. Not long afterwards he launched the first Latin edition of the Institutes under the name of Alcuin, concealing under this anagram the true authorship, lest his name, already hated by the adherents of the Papacy every where, should retard the circulation of the book in Italy. From Ferrara he was



driven by the remonstrances of the pope and the king of France with the duke; and we find him next at Noyon, where his oldest brother had died, devolving on Calvin the family property. Calvin realized his effects, and, accompanied by his younger brother and sister, left his native town for ever. Returning to Basle late in 1536 he had, in order to avoid the invading armies of the Emperor, to take the circuitous route by Geneva, a circumstance which changed all his after life. His arrival was made known to Farel, who had succeeded in winning over the little republic to a renunciation of the Papacy, and an establishment by law of the reformed faith.

Dr. D'Aubigné gives, as might be expected, a very lengthy narrative of the troubles which terminated in the emancipation of his native city from the yoke at once of its prince bishops and of the pope. The politics of Geneva for the first forty years or thereabouts of the sixteenth century are indeed a curious and not uninteresting study, exhibiting, as they do with much completeness, the working on a very small scale of those mighty political, social, and religious influences which have so often in their struggles convulsed whole nations and continents. But it is quite out of our power to attempt any reproduction of Dr. D'Aubigné's elaborate details. We must be content to indicate with the utmost brevity the circumstances which led to the ascendancy of protestant and republican principles at Geneva. Dr. D'Aubigné gives, however, the etymology of the much-disputed word *Huguenot*; and his paragraph and his authority on such a point are too remarkable to



be passed by. "The duke's party accosting the independent Genevans, and gallicizing each in his own way the German word Eidesgennossen (confederates), which they could not pronounce, called after them Eidguenots, Eignots, Eyguenots, Huguenots! This word is met with in the chronicles of the time written in different ways; Michel Roset, the most respectable of these authorities of the sixteenth century, writes Hugenots; we adopt that form, because it is the only one that has passed into our language. It is possible that the name of the citizen, Besançon Hugues, who became the principal leader of this party, may have contributed to the preference of this form over all the others. In any case it must be remembered that until after the Reformation this sobriquet had a purely political meaning, in no respect religious, and designated simply the friends of independence. Many years after, the enemies of the protestants of France called them by this name, wishing to stigmatize them, and impute to them a foreign, republican, and heretical origin. Such is the true etymology of the word. It would be very strange if these two denominations, which are really but one, had played so great a part in the sixteenth century at Geneva and in French protestantism, without having had any connexion with one another. A little later, about Christmas, 1518, when the cause of the alliance was more advanced, its use became more general. The adherents of the duke had no sooner started the nickname than their opponents, repaying them in their own coin, called out, 'Hold your tongues, you Mamelukes!'. As the Mamelukes have denied Christ to follow Mahomet, so you deny



liberty and the public cause to put yourselves under a tyranny.' At the head of these Mamelukes were some forty rich tradesmen, men good enough at heart despite their nickname, but they were men of business, who feared that disturbances would diminish their gains. The term Mamelukes put them into a great passion. 'Yes,' continued the Huguenots, 'Sultan Selim conquered the Mamelukes last year in Egypt; but it seems that these slaves, when expelled from Cairo, took refuge at Geneva. However, if you do not like the name stay, since you deliver up Geneva through avarice, we will call you Judases!'"—D'Aubigné, pp. 118—120.

The Reformed faith had, indeed, found its way to this city at an early date from the neighbouring Swiss protestant churches which had been created by the labours of Zuingli and his followers. The progress of these doctrines had been at Geneva, as elsewhere, greatly assisted by the ignorance and profligacy of the clergy, and had likewise had a special advantage from the treachery of the prince bishops, who engaged themselves in perpetual intrigues to betray the liberties of the free city to the neighbouring and powerful dukes of Savoy, of whom they were generally family connexions. The last *de facto* bishop (Pierre de la Baume), alarmed at the disaffection which his treachery and misgovernment had caused, fled from the city and in a manner like our own James II. abdicated in 1533. For the rest we may conveniently borrow a few words from Hooker, who gives, it will be remembered, a concise account of the introduction of the Calvinistic discipline into Geneva by way of preface to his own great



work: "At the coming of Calvin thither the form of their civil regiment was popular, as it continueth at this day; neither king, nor duke, nor nobleman of any authority or power over them, but officers" (syndics) "chosen by the people yearly out of themselves to order all things with public consent. For spiritual government they had no laws at all agreed on, but did what the pastors of their souls could by persuasion win them unto."—Hooker, Preface, ii. 1. In this state of things Calvin "fell at the length upon Geneva;" and was straightway solicited by Farel to take up his abode there, and to assist in organizing and consolidating the still weak and unsettled Protestantism of the state.

Farel is too important a person both in himself and in his relations to Calvin to allow of our omitting to give some account of him. A Frenchman, like Calvin, and some ten years his senior, he had in early life been an ardent student; and by perusal of the Bible had been led to the reflections which converted him from an enthusiastic zealot for the pope into a no less enthusiastic evangelist of Protestantism in its extremest forms. His zeal was from first to last uncompromising, violent, and restless; he could not be quiet, and was banished from France amongst the earliest sufferers in the persecutions. He betook himself to Basle, and there made himself an enemy, as he did every where else, and one not absolutely unfriendly to the cause of the Reformation, in the person of Erasmus. This learned and clever man, like a vast number of wise and thoughtful churchmen throughout western christendom, was convinced at once of the urgent



necessity for an extensive reformation of the church, and for the preservation, along with the reforms, of ecclesiastical unity, apostolic discipline and government, and catholic ritual. Such ideas were for a time entertained by Calvin himself, as they were during a large part of his course by Luther, and by Melancthon perhaps to the very last. Calvin soon persuaded himself not only that truth and purity of doctrine are the paramount considerations, but also of the much more questionable assumption that these supreme blessings were not to be hoped for without an utter subversion of the ecclesiastical institutions of christendom, and a rebuilding of them afresh from the very foundations. With characteristic thoroughness Calvin hated the "temporizers" as much, if not more, than the "mass priests" themselves. Farel in this, as in other things, was quite one with him, and outvied him in coarseness and violence. Farel stigmatized Erasmus as "Balaam;" and Erasmus retorted by nicknaming Farel, not without a certain sly verisimilitude, "Phallicus." Erasmus at length made Basle too hot for Farel, who retired to Berne; and at length in his crusading zeal found his way to Geneva. "Au mois d'Octobre (1532) vint à Genève un chétif malheureux prêdîcant nommé Maître Guillaume," says the sister Jeanne de Jussie, who has left an amusing account of the expulsion of the nuns from the city. "A little man of mean appearance, with a vulgar face, a narrow forehead, a pale but sunburnt complexion, and a chin on which appeared two or three tufts of a red and ill-combed beard," is the unattractive sketch given of him by Mr. Dyer. He made



his appearance, however, on a scene well suited for the display of his remarkable character. The Genevese were in full and open rebellion against their spiritual and temporal rulers; and had both from the reaction against superstition and tyranny and from their natural bent given way to a general licence of habits and manners which loudly called for vigorous interference. "Such was the city," says M. Bungener, "or rather the camp, which Farel wished to subject to all the strictness of Gospel morality. Obstacles multiplied, but Farel did not lose courage; he felt himself bound to struggle on to the last; and if the work of God was to go down at Geneva before the obstinacy of man, it was the duty of the minister of God to uphold it until the very last moment. Small of stature and in aspect mean,—*contemptible*, as St. Paul said of himself,—before the rebels he rose to the height of indignation and faith. Their eyes were abased before him; and though murmurs attended him, it was from afar, and they were to be hushed again the moment he turned round. In the pulpit he was unsparing. His word rolled like thunder; and his invectives were showered down upon those who despised the Gospel. He was rich in those expressions which would now be called scarcely evangelical, but which we might more justly call simply unpolished, for nothing is more evangelical at bottom than the indignation that armed him."—P. 99. Farel's reckless zeal and physical energy had, however, effectually prepared the way for the peculiar genius of Calvin. The monuments of idolatry and superstition had been destroyed root and branch, and with them,



no doubt, many an innocent appendage of devotion and of decency; and the ascendancy of the reforming interest in the state had been secured and vindicated. But the Romish party was yet strong, and had potent allies outside the city walls. Farel had cleared the stage, but could do nothing to replace what he had swept away. He felt the arrival in Geneva of a man like Calvin to be a godsend indeed, and was instant and importunate on him to undertake the pastorate for which himself had prepared the way. Calvin was reluctant, and hung back; he pleaded his unfitness to grapple with the turbulent populace of Geneva; he declared himself best fitted to serve the good cause by his writings; he required Farel to let him go back to his books. "Thy studies," said the zealot, "are a pretext! I tell thee that if thou refusest to associate thyself with my work, God will curse thee for having sought thyself and not Christ." It was, as Calvin said, "as if God from on high had stretched out His hand to stop me." And so Calvin was prevailed on to take up his abode at Geneva; and was named at first a "teacher in theology," and soon afterwards regularly appointed by the magistrates to the ministry.

Calvin was not a man to be second where he gained standing at all. Farel's ruder and more boisterous nature fell at once into the second place; and in what it subsequently effected at Geneva, did simply as Calvin planned for it. Calvin at once began with characteristic resolution and thoroughness to order and settle every thing in church and commonwealth. The Genevese populace had been noted for its gaiety, fickleness, and



licentiousness, qualities which had been quite as much humoured as subdued by the capricious government of the prince bishops; who, so long as their revenues and dignity were respected, and the outward observances of religion kept up, had left their subjects to do much as they pleased. Calvin saw "how needful bridles were to be put in the jaws of such a city," and "how dangerous it was that the whole estate of that church should hang still on so slender a thread as the liking of an ignorant multitude is, if it have power to change whatsoever itself listeth. Wherefore, taking unto him two of the other ministers" (Farel and Courault) "for more countenance of the action (albeit the rest were all against it), they moved and in the end persuaded with much ado the people (July 1537) to bind themselves by solemn oaths,—first, never to admit the Papacy amongst them again; and, secondly, to live in obedience unto such orders concerning the exercise of their religion and the form of their ecclesiastical government as those their true and faithful ministers of God's word had agreeably to Scripture set down for that end and purpose."—Hooker, Preface, ii. 1. These "orders" were embodied in a code of "Articles of Church Government," which in effect reduced Geneva to a theocracy. These institutions were at a later period drawn out into a much completer form, and carried into far more detailed application. Reserving our description of them therefore for the present, we follow the history of Calvin's pastorate. This, with its rigorous and searching application of discipline, soon became very burdensome to the light-hearted and frolicsome Genevese.



“The syndics and the council of Geneva seem for a time to be new men, and Calvin’s adversaries are obliged to acknowledge at least the perfect impartiality which presides at the infliction of the penalties. One of the first punished is a counsellor, Ami Curtet; another a citizen of high station, Matthieu Manlich. An obstinate gambler is set in the stocks for an hour, with his playing cards hung round his neck. The author of a base masquerade is condemned to ask pardon on his knees in the cathedral. A man guilty of perjury was hoisted up on a ladder, and remained there several hours, with his right hand fastened to the top. An adulterer and his accomplice were ignominiously paraded through the town. A woman who made head-dresses was condemned to two days’ imprisonment for having immodestly decked out a young bride. Some parents were punished for having neglected or refused to send their children to school.”—Bungener, p. 112.

“When these things,” as Hooker says, “began to be put in ure, the people also (which causes moving them thereunto themselves best know) began to repent them of what they had done, and irefully to champ upon the bit they had taken into their mouths.” Murmurs and discontent ensued, and were either sternly suppressed or contemptuously disregarded by the resolute pastors. The disaffected appealed to Berne, where the Reformation had been carried out in somewhat less unsparing fashion. At Berne the Eucharist was administered with unleavened bread; the fonts were left and used in the churches; Christmas, Easter, Ascension, and Lady Day were observed; and last, but in the judgment of



the gay Genevese by no means least, brides came to church, perhaps we ought rather to say to "meeting," in flowing tresses. The discipline and ceremonial of Berne furnished a convenient cry for the disaffected in Geneva to take up. They soon formed a distinct party, were stigmatized by the stricter sort as the Libertines, and they found many friends amongst the leading men in the state.

The Bernese watched with no little anxiety the growing heart-burnings and disorders amongst their neighbours. Berne was a leading state in Switzerland; it was mainly through her support that Geneva had held her own against the dukes of Savoy, the prince bishops, and the popes; the Bernese magistrates naturally expected to be listened to about the matters in dispute, and they interposed their good offices, recommending Calvin and his colleagues to make some little concessions. Nothing of the kind, however, would Calvin and Farel listen to; and they remained obstinate even when a Synod of the Protestant churches held at Lausanne had decided on general conformity to the usages of Berne, and the civil magistrates of Geneva had resolved, as became them, on compliance. As Easter Sunday drew near, Calvin and Farel not only declined to use the prescribed unleavened bread, but even to administer the Communion to their backsliding flocks at all. The magistrates retorted by prohibiting them from preaching, an order which the pastors so flagrantly trampled under foot as to mount their pulpits on Easter Day, and to inveigh bitterly against both the dissoluteness of the people and the supineness of the rulers in



enforcing discipline. M. Bungener, with a want of impartiality which is unhappily too common in his book, suppresses all mention of the prohibition of the magistrates, which certainly is very important as an explanation of their next step. The daring rebellion of the pastors was such as could not be overlooked. Next day sentence of banishment was passed, and Calvin and Farel had to quit Geneva within three days. "So be it," said Calvin; "it is better to obey God than man."

These words, and indeed the whole business, are very characteristic and significant. One might have supposed that a man of Calvin's discernment would have made little of the trifles round which the whole quarrel revolved. But this is only one amongst many proofs which those times furnish, that ceremonies were not by the Reformers regarded as they are by us. "Romanism," as M. Bungener remarks, "had so ruled by ceremonies and forms, that it was scarce possible to retain any of them, and especially to return to any of them, without seeming to restore it more or less, and seeking to do so altogether." Calvin also thought, and probably with reason, that the Libertines rather took these matters up as pretexts than found in them the real grounds of their hostility. Explain it as we may, certain it is that Calvin risked the very existence of that civil and ecclesiastical polity on which his heart and mind were fixed in order to maintain points like these. He hazarded his own personal success in life, rejected the authority of the other sister Protestant churches, and braved the scandal to the cause



of the Reformation which the sudden and conspicuous overthrow of the Genevan institutions caused, for the sake of shearing off the bride's tresses, and making people work on Christmas Day! He would compromise nothing, concede nothing, and retract nothing. It is important to note that on his own principles he could not do so. Puritanism has many close and subtle affinities with Popery; and M. Bungener parries Romish attacks against Calvin's ordinances at Geneva by a very successful "tu quoque," based upon the equally minute and vexatious regulations of the Holy Father at Rome. The childish preciseness of such governments, and the stolid tenacity with which frivolous details are insisted on by them, are only intelligible on the principle on which Calvin spoke when he declared he would "obey God rather than man;" and left the Genevan church to its fate rather than bate a jot or a tittle of his sumptuary and ceremonial precepts. In the very spirit of the old Roman Metellus, "*de civitate decedere maluit quam de sententia*," and he did so in the persuasion, we may not doubt an honest one, that these things were part of the law of God, against whose statutes no exception must be taken. Religionists of this sort,—the Romanist from his theory of an earthly organ of infallibility,—the Puritan from his notion that the Bible must be the rule to direct all things, "even so far as the taking up of a rush or a straw" (Cartwright, quoted by Hooker, ii. 1, 2),—see no degrees in duties enjoined by the spiritual authority. To surrender the merest iota of what is in fact the very commandment of God is the rankest impiety; to resist it, rebellion



against Heaven; to tamper with it, the most daring presumption. The very thought that what God wills should not be done, or but half done, is a thorn in the side which suffers the saint to have no rest. Impediments of circumstances are but trials of faith, which must succumb before those who bear with them the commission of God. If men are not pleased or suited by what Heaven enacts for them, so much the worse for men. It is not to be expected that those appointed to carry out the will of God can stoop to regard human expediences or mundane convenience. On such principles and in such a spirit Calvin laid down and imposed his beloved church discipline and polity. Such, too, was the tone and temper of our own Puritans, the legitimate followers of Calvin. "Whatsoever is not in the word of God is not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hence it must be that the Bible contains all needful directions for church matters; what is not found in it is sin, what is found in it is a commandment of God. It only needs to take one step further—to us certainly a very long one, but to Calvin a very sure one—and to convince ourselves that the Genevan regimen is demonstrable in every part from Scripture, and then we acquire at once an indefeasible sanction for every detail of it. Calvin and his colleagues undoubtedly saw in their ecclesiastical state the new Jerusalem come down from above. They could not suffer a hostile finger to be laid so much as on the skirts of one of the least of her ministers, nor a stone to be displaced from her battlements, which were the Lord's. Magistrates and councils could not make and unmake God's laws at



pleasure. The municipal bodies, it is true, had established the doctrine and discipline at Geneva; but they had not therefore the right to subvert them. The majority which had voted the Ecclesiastical Articles was a christian majority, acting according to the will of God, and therefore to be honoured and obeyed. The numbers who two years afterwards cancelled what they had previously enjoined formed an infidel and immoral majority, which stood self-condemned by its very act. Calvin shook off the dust from his feet, and left Geneva to the wrath of God.

At first the recreant Genevese had a keen sensation of relief, and utterly declined to listen to the intercession of the good-natured Bernese municipality, which as usual strove to make peace, to procure the abrogation of the new ceremonies, and to bring about the recall of the banished pastors. Calvin accordingly proceeded to Strasburg, then a free city, which had for the time embraced the cause of the Reformation, and which afforded a safe asylum for the persecuted Protestants of various countries. Here he received an appointment as Professor of Theology, and pastor of a small flock of French Protestant refugees. He continued at Strasburg three years,—years which were important ones in his life in many ways. He made, in the comparative leisure he now enjoyed, the most considerable of the many additions which one after another swelled the Institutes to their present dimensions. Especially did the edition of 1539 contain a developed exhibition of his ideas on church government, a topic to which his thoughts had naturally been more than



ever before directed. He gave to the world in the same year his Commentary on the Romans, the first of a long and very important series of exegetical works, which we must not fail to notice more particularly in the sequel. He took part, with other leading Reformers, in negotiations held under the auspices of the Emperor at Diets held at Worms and at Ratisbon; which negotiations in the end proved abortive, though carried on to some length, and holding out hopes at one time of reuniting the severed communities of christians, Papal and Protestant. And last, and we fear from Calvin's point of view we must say least, he took a wife. The transactions connected with his marriage have altogether a curious and characteristic air, suggesting irresistibly that Calvin suffered himself to be over-persuaded in the matter, as Hooker did, by his friends. Calvin was advised that a wife would be the best possible nurse for him, would make him more comfortable, and prolong his life. So he commissioned his friends to procure for him the article they described; and stated without reserve his wants to Farel amongst others, "Remember, what I desire above all to find is a help-meet. I am not, thou knowest, one of those lovers who adore even the defects of the woman of whom they are enamoured. The only beauty that can please my heart is one that is gentle, chaste, modest, economical, patient, and, finally, careful of her husband's health." Various negotiations were set on foot by his friends, of one of which another letter to Farel gives some curious particulars. "I was offered a lady who was young, rich, of noble birth, and whose dower much surpassed



all that I can desire. Two things, however, urged me to refuse: she does not know French, and it seems to me she must be rather proud of her birth and education. Her brother, of rare piety, and blinded by his friendship so as to forget his own interests, pressed me to accept, and his wife joined her solicitations to his. What was I to do? I should have been compelled, if the Lord had not extricated me. I answer that I accept if she will, on her part, undertake to learn our tongue. She asks for time to reflect; and I immediately commission my brother, with one of my friends, to go and ask for me the hand of another person, who will bring me, without a fortune, a dowry good enough, if her qualities answer to what is said of them. If, as I hope, my proposal is accepted, the marriage will not be delayed beyond the 10th of March (1540), and all my desire is that thou shouldst come and bless our union.”—Bungener, p. 158. This project was not realized. Some details respecting his betrothed, which came to Calvin’s knowledge, obliged him to withdraw his promise; and some months afterwards he seems much discouraged. “I have not found yet,” he writes to Farel. “Would it not be wiser to give up my search?” At length the disinterested efforts made on his behalf were crowned with success. “He found at last what he sought. An Anabaptist, John Storder, who was brought back by him to the Gospel, had died shortly after, leaving a widow and orphans. She was called Idelette, Idelette de Bure or Van Buren, from the name of a small town of Guelderland. Bucer knew her; he had seen her excellent and admirable qualities still further developed



by the burdens and responsibilities of widowhood. He spoke of her to Calvin, and Calvin's choice was fixed. She brought him as her dower serious piety, watchful tenderness, and a soul equal to every sacrifice."—Bungener, p. 159.

Though not disposed to flinch from the least of his demands, yet it was plain from the first that Calvin's regrets turned back to Geneva. Scarce three months of his banishment had expired when we find him inditing a stirring epistle to "his well-beloved brethren in the Lord who are the relics of the dispersion of the Church of Geneva." He defends vigorously his own conduct; he animates his faithful adherents to steadfastness; he shows that it was undoubtedly Satan who had "employed the malice" of his opponents "as an instrument of war against the Church;" he prophesies that all their ways will be seen "evidently to tend to confusion." These predictions were soon verified. Calvin's departure had left every thing in the little state at sixes and sevens. All the institutions—civil, social, and ecclesiastical, had been grouped round him as their centre and mainspring; and his absence disorganized every thing. The example of successful resistance to authority had also proved, as might be expected, a fruitful one. The magistrates could not enforce the laws. All was laxity, powerlessness, and anarchy. The Papal and reactionist faction, which had been reduced by sentences of death and banishment but never quite rooted out, revived, and became energetic and progressive in the city. Some few retrograded openly to Romanism. The expelled Bishop began to meditate



a reoccupation of his episcopal palace. Cardinal Sadolet, a dexterous politician, an elegant scholar, and amongst the most skilful controversialists of his party, penned at the Pope's suggestion a letter to the senate and people of Geneva, in which he set forth their present disorders and sufferings as the sad results of disobedience to ancient authority and of revolt from the safe fold of the church. He pointed to a return as the only assured refuge. The letter received a polite acknowledgment, but no further response from the Genevese. Calvin, however, from Strasburg flew to the rescue, and penned for his former flock an answer to Sadolet so keen, thorough, and effective as to close the controversy at once. The effect of this success at Geneva was marked; and it stimulated a reaction, already setting in, in favour of Calvin and his system. "Neither reply nor attempt at reply was made, that we know of, to this answer of Calvin's. It soon ran through Europe. Luther enjoyed it thoroughly. He realized all the power and promise of a controversy conducted with so much ease, frankness, and vivacity. 'Here is a writing,' he said, 'which has hands and feet. I rejoice that God raises up such men. They will continue what I have begun against Antichrist, and with the help of God they will finish it.' When Sadolet received the epistle he may also have received, at the same time, some details upon the effects it had produced at Geneva. In the first place, there was the satisfaction always felt on reading a work which says precisely what a man would have said of himself, had he known how to say it: then there was the joy of the



victory, for the victory over Sadolet was evident and incontestable; and as victory always draws after it the undecided, it was the joy of all, or nearly all. In many it was easily transformed by Calvin's friends into gratitude; they dared say publicly there was no one like him for such services. They re-perused the eloquent apology, which he made in passing, for his ministry at Geneva, and they allowed themselves to be moved by words so true and noble: 'Though discharged for the present from the administration of the Church of Geneva, nevertheless this cannot deprive me of bearing towards her a paternal love and charity; towards her, I say, over whom God once ordained me, and so has obliged me for ever to keep faith and loyalty with her.'"—Bungener, pp. 145, 146.

Calvin's leading opponents at the same time discredited themselves by intriguing with the potentates whose territories encircled Geneva, and who were always on the watch for an opportunity of annexing this little free state. This sort of treachery as it was most dangerous, so it was most hateful to the Genevese; and the doubts to which repeated examples of it gave rise as to the patriotism of the Libertines did much to complete the reaction in Calvin's favour, and to establish the preponderating influence he eventually acquired. In 1540 the council charged Amy Perrin "to find means to bring back Master Calvin." Calvin, however, was in no haste; he pleaded his engagements in Germany, his students, and his flock at Strasburg; he professed disinclination to face again the agitation and opposition which his past experience told him must be



expected at Geneva. As Calvin hung back, the Genevese of course became more urgent. They passed repeated resolutions in amusing variety on the absorbing topic of his return in all their various assemblies. The smaller council on October 13th resolves "to write a letter to Monsieur Calvin to pray that he would assist us." The Council of Two Hundred on October 19th determines, "in order that the honour and glory of God may be promoted, to seek all possible means to have Master Caulvin as preacher." On October 20th in the General Council it was ordered "to send to Strasburg to fetch Master Jean Calvinus, who is very learned, to be minister in this city." Circular letters were written to the governments of Zurich, Berne, and Basle requesting their good offices; Farel was instigated to write characteristically to the coy exile; Bucer threatened him with the afflicting judgments of God if he turned a deaf ear longer to importunity. At last Calvin gave way, but only in August, 1541.

"On the 19th of August it was decided to send and fetch him. On the 22nd, thirty-six crowns were allotted to 'Eustache Vincent, our mounted herald, to go and fetch Master Calvin.' The 29th, it was resolved that he shall be lodged 'in the house now occupied by the minister Bernard, to whom another will be given.' The 30th, a letter was written to the Council of Neuchâtel, in order that Farel might be authorized to accompany his friend as far as Geneva. The 4th of September, it was resolved to lodge Calvin in the house called the Chantry, before the cathedral. The 9th, there was another change; he is to have given him



‘the house of the lord of Freyneville.’ Two councillors are commissioned to install him there, seeing that ‘he is to be here this evening.’ At length on the 13th, ‘Master Jean Calvin is arrived from Strasburg, and has excused himself in detail for the long tarrying which he made.’

“Other details have been found in the registers. Thus, on the 20th of September, ‘Ordered, that cloth be bought to make him a gown;’ and a few days after, ‘The treasurer was ordered to disburse for Master Calvin’s gown, including cloth and fur, eight crowns.’ On the 4th of October, ‘Salary of Master Calvin, who is a man of great learning, and favourable to the restoration of the Christian churches, and is exposed to heavy expenses from strangers who come this way. Whereupon it was resolved that he should have for wages yearly five hundred florins, twelve measures of wheat, and two casks of wine.’ Five hundred florins represented then about three thousand francs, or a hundred and twenty pounds at the present day.

“The house of the lord of Freyneville was a house which had been formerly sold by the state to that nobleman, who was originally from Picardy. Having left Geneva, he was desirous of selling it, and the council had decided on repurchasing it. Calvin, however, for what reasons we know not, did not enter it till two years afterwards, and was located during those two years in a house close by, formerly the property of the abbot of Bonmont, Aime de Gingins. Both were in the Rue des Chanoines, and corresponded one to the present number eleven, the other to number thirteen.



Smaller than the houses which have replaced them, each of them had a small garden at the back; on the same side the view extended over the terraced roofs of the city, which rose one above another, like the steps of a ladder, and included in the far distance the lake and its shores, the district of Vaud, and the wooded slopes of the Jura.”—Bungener, pp. 166, 167

Thus did the grateful and obsequious citizens show their love and zeal for their returned pastor and master; thus was he, as Beza says, “received with so extraordinary zeal by that poor people, famishing to hear their faithful pastor, that they took no rest till he was fixed there for ever.”

Calvin’s time was now come for realizing those ideas of Church and State which his experiences at Geneva and his reflections during the comparative leisure of Strasburg had led him to form. Those ideas may be found in the fourth book of the Institutes. Even before he set foot in Geneva on his recall, he had made representations to the council of the necessity for “some scheme of discipline agreeable to the word of God and the practice of the primitive church;” and had communicated his views in outline. No sooner was he fairly reinstated in his office, than he requested the council to name delegates to confer with him and his brother ministers on the whole subject. Calvin’s own proposals were, of course, adopted almost without modification, and were finally voted by the General Assembly of the citizens on January 2nd, 1542, from which day accordingly the regular and legal establishment of the Calvinistic republic must date.



The utter subversion of the ancient regime, both ecclesiastical and civil, had left a fair and open field for Calvin's institutions. These, whilst preserving as regards state matters a certain continuity with the old system, amounted in truth to little else than a complete reorganization of church and state, and a reorganization which adapted the latter to the purposes of the former. Calvin's political reforms need not be described. Their purport was direct and plain. They aimed at reducing the power of the democratic element in the constitution ; for Calvin was a thorough aristocrat, and had moreover had already painful experience of the fickleness of popular favour. The government of the state was carried on by various councils one within the other, and all eventually controlled by the general body of the citizens, from which they derived their authority and received their election. By making the meetings of the General Assembly very rare, and limiting the business of them to such as might be brought forward from the smaller or ordinary council, Calvin practically concentrated the power of government in the hands of the latter. The ordinary council consisted of twenty-five members. It consisted of the four syndics annually elected, the four outgoing syndics, and other elected members ; over the choice of whom, however, the council itself possessed such control as to make it in large measure self-elected, and practically to reduce the government to an oligarchy. The executive functions belonged entirely to this body ; and from the duties assigned to it in preparing the business for the larger councils of Sixty, Two Hundred, and the General As-



sembly, it had in fact the judicial and legislative powers too. This ordinary council was by Calvin's regulations closely connected with the ecclesiastical authorities, and was thus the instrument through which the whole government assumed a theocratic tone. As to the church: "There are four orders or kinds of office," say the ordinances, "instituted by our Lord for the general government of His church,—namely, pastors, then doctors, then elders or presbyters (anciens), and fourthly, deacons." The clergy, i. e. the pastors and doctors, met together in synod, and were called "the Venerable Company," for the regulation of affairs exclusively spiritual, such e. g. as the qualification and appointment of candidates for the ministry. The chief engine of ecclesiastical authority was the Consistory, which was composed of the pastors of the five city churches and twelve lay and elective members. These lay members were annually named by the smaller council on the recommendation of the Venerable Company. Thus, though the lay element was twice as large as the clerical, yet the latter had the great advantage of being fixed, whilst the former was annually changed, and besides practically owed its appointment and authority to the clergy. Calvin appears ere long to have taken on himself the perpetual presidency of the Consistory: and we can under these circumstances well understand how, as Hooker says, "when things came to trial of practice, their pastor's learning would be at all times of force to over-persuade simple men, who knowing the time of their own presidentship to be but short, would always stand in fear of their minister's perpetual autho-



rity; and among the ministers themselves, one being so far in estimation above the rest, the voices of the rest were likely to be given for the most part respectively, with a kind of secret dependence and awe; so that in show a marvellous indifferently composed senate ecclesiastical was to govern, but in effect only one man should, as the spirit and soul of the residue, do all in all."—Preface, ii. 4. This court had "the care of all men's manners, power of determining all kinds of ecclesiastical causes, and authority to convent, to control, to punish, as far as with excommunication, whomsoever they should think worthy, none either small or great excepted." Within its jurisdiction came all breaches of morality, and of church order, and all false doctrine. The pastors were expected to report to it parents who did not send their children to school, or who themselves neglected their public religious duties. The pastors visited in regular rotation every house within their cure to inquire into the habits of its inmates; and spies, according to some authorities, were employed to watch for infringements of good manners and of discipline, and were paid for their services out of the fines levied on offenders. The court met every Thursday; and where its own spiritual censures seemed insufficient, handed over culprits by an official representation to the council. It is needless to add that severe pains and penalties of all kinds waited obsequiously on the behests of the Consistory; for the civil courts were regulated by Calvin's code, which contemplated it as the first duty of the state to make and enforce all such laws as conduce to the establishment



and maintenance of "God's kingdom on earth." Thus the ecclesiastical authorities borrowed all such effectiveness for their decrees as temporal punishments could afford, whilst the odium of these severities seemed to attach rather to the magistrates who were the immediate instruments of them.

Dr. D'Aubigné will, no doubt, give us some graphic details of the administration of Geneva under this system. The instalment of his work now before us, however, does not carry the history beyond the year 1532. M. Bungener rightly characterizes the result of Calvin's labours as the production of a "Protestant Rome," and admits that some of his measures "can scarcely find favour with our more enlarged ideas," but is too much of the advocate to give a full and fair representation of the spiritual and social despotism under which the light-hearted Genevese now found themselves. The Consistory and its agents extended their inquisitorial interference down to the smallest details even of private life; from the cradle to the grave, from church and market-place to his very dinner-table and his bed-room, the citizen was unceasingly guided and superintended almost in every act and thought. Not only were all the grosser vices repressed with terrible severity, but lighter peccadilloes, youthful indiscretions, and many things deserving rather the name of follies than faults were rigorously treated. Works of fiction, cards, all games of chance, and all dancing and masquerading were utterly prohibited. Holidays and festivals of all kinds were done away with except Sunday, if that, indeed, be an excep-



tion which had under penalty to be kept with strict attendance at sermon and seclusion at home. The number of dishes at dinner and dessert was limited; slashed breeches, jewels, and various of the gayer kinds of silks and stuffs were banned. Bouquets given to brides might not be encircled with gold or precious stones. The bride's dress itself was matter of very careful regulation. It is on record, "*Une épouse étant sortie Dimanche avec les cheveux plus abattus qu'il ne se doit faire, ce qui est d'un mauvais exemple, et contraire à ce qu'on leur évangélise, on fait mettre en prison sa maîtresse, les deux qui l'ont menée, et celle qui l'a coiffée.*"—Registers of Geneva, cited by Dyer, p. 78. The citizens were not to be from home later than nine at night; and were strictly to attend all sermons together with their household, and not to fail in being present at the quarterly administration of the Lord's Supper, for so much, neither less nor more, of this means of grace did Calvin ordain for his people. Such are a few specimens of the municipal regulations formed under the control of the Consistory. And they were enforced with unsparing, sometimes frightful cruelty. Imprisonments, public penances, the stocks, fines, and even tortures and death, were dispensed with no sparing hand. A child was beheaded in 1558 for having struck her parents; a youth of sixteen, for having threatened to do so, shared the same fate. Such incidents as these are passed over in the pages of M. Bungener; but they may be found in abundance in the Life of Calvin by Dr. Paul Henry, translated from the German by Dr. Stebbing. Dr. Henry's biography is a most complete



and exhaustive magazine of materials; and its author, though a warm admirer of Calvin, is too candid to suppress the facts which his researches have revealed to him. The effects of Calvin's terrorism must to complete this part of the subject be noticed; and as M. Bungener leaves us here almost without help, we must avail ourselves of that of the more copious Dr. Henry. Quoting a recent Genevese writer, Galiffe, he says: "To those who imagine that Calvin did nothing but good, I could produce our registers, covered with records of illegitimate children, which were exposed in all parts of the town and country; hideous trials for obscenity; wills, in which fathers and mothers accuse their children not only of errors but of crimes; agreements before notaries between young women and their lovers, in which the latter, even in the presence of the parents of their paramours, make them an allowance for the education of their illegitimate offspring; I could instance multitudes of forced marriages, in which the delinquents were conducted from the prison to the church; mothers who abandoned their children to the hospital, whilst they themselves lived in abundance with a second husband; bundles of law-suits between brothers; heaps of secret negotiations; men and women burnt for witchcraft; sentences of death in frightful numbers; and all these things among the generation nourished by the mystic manna of Calvin."

We cannot wonder that such a system was soon found by the people to be but a revival of the Papacy under another shape. "Details," says M. Bungener,



“are lost in the general survey;” but he himself has embalmed a few characteristic specimens. He tells us e. g. of a “Lyons refugee” who exclaimed, “‘How delightful it is to see this lovely liberty in this city!’ ‘Liberty!’ said a woman of the lower orders, ‘we were obliged formerly to go to mass, and now we are obliged to go to sermon.’” Calvin at Geneva, like the Pope at Rome, was undoubtedly “an historical fact;” and one not lightly to be overlooked. “One day in the large hall of the Cloisters Calvin was giving his lectures on divinity—suddenly they hear outside laughter, cries, and a great clamour. This proceeds from fifteen or twenty Libertines.” Again, “Some Libertines a few days after disturbed Calvin’s preaching by entering the church very noisily; so a gibbet was raised in the Place St. Gervais, but happily it did service for no one.” The daring of the Libertines, notwithstanding such a significant warning, increases. “Some of them call their dogs by his name. When he passes through the streets some hiss; and others cry *Calvin* in such a manner as to make it sound *Cain*.” “Raoul Monnet had drawn, or caused to be drawn,” a series of licentious prints; and was for that crime tried, condemned, and executed. The Libertines persisted in giving, contrary to the ordinances, certain names to their children, “to which in Romish times a superstitious meaning had been attached. *Claude* promised a long life, *Balthazar* good health,” &c. Calvin fought with his peculiar tenacity and indomitable thoroughness against each and every form of Libertinism, though sometimes with but divided success.



Such a system as that imposed by Calvin on Geneva can only be maintained on two suppositions, both of them diametrically opposed to modern notions, both theological and political. Calvin was possessed on the one hand with the ancient notions as to the functions of the state; on the other, with the belief that the New Testament, like the Old, contemplated a visible theocracy. The ancients in their political theories subordinated the end, the offices, and the happiness of the individual citizen to the well-being of the whole; the man existed for the sake of the state. The modern statesman aims, indeed, at securing life and property, but leaves the freest play for individual character and habits which may consist with the rights of others. The institutions of the country grow up under his hand out of the needs and the interests of the particular persons in it. Calvin, on the contrary, begins all *à priori*. Politically he had an ideal polity, to which without sparing and scruple he bent every element he might have to deal with; theologically he had, moreover, "a pattern shown to him in the mount," after which it was a duty to God to "make all things." Hence every thing about his regulations, down to "the fringes and the pomegranates," was to be submitted to, whether expedient, convenient, or not. "Nothing is more displeasing to God," he observes in a letter to the Protector Somerset, "than when we, by our human prudence, would either modify or retrench, advance or retire, against His will." So persuaded, Calvin was dogmatic and peremptory in enforcing obedience to his doctrine, discipline, and regulations. He was, no doubt,



naturally of an obstinate and imperious temper; but it is impossible to study his character without admitting also the depth and the sincerity of his convictions. Whether it were rather the convictions which created the unswerving arbitrariness he uniformly exhibited, or the temper which gave absoluteness to the convictions, who shall say? Men act from mixed motives, even when they seem to themselves to be cherishing but pure ones; and Calvin assuredly was no exception to the rule.

From 1542 Calvin's reign at Geneva was unbroken. The Libertines from time to time gave him indeed much trouble, and their strength and violence were occasionally such as seriously to endanger the established order of things. The sect acquired a certain solidity and definiteness of theological standing at Geneva from opposition to Calvin's doctrines, and no little influence from the disaffection generated by the impartial strictness of his discipline. In religion the Libertines held a sort of philosophic and pantheistic Anabaptism, which was particularly repulsive to a hard and logical intellect like Calvin's: "God is in every thing and every one; all therefore that is said, thought, and done proceeds from Him." Such are, in short and coarse terms, the tenets with which the Genevan Libertines are credited. Calvin published in 1544 a writing entitled, "To the Ministers of the Church of Neufchatel against the fanatical and furious sect of the Libertines who call themselves Spirituals;" and took within his own jurisdiction the most stringent measures against them. Yet so galling was the pressure of the discipline, and so



vehement the discontent with it and him, that he had often need of all his energy and all his resolution to hold his own. "For nine years," says M. Bungener, "he was every moment on the point of being—not conquered, but crushed; for nine years it was his to expect every month and every week to be expelled from that city which he was nevertheless continuing to render illustrious and powerful abroad; for nine years he guided Geneva as a vessel on fire, which burns the captain's feet and yet obeys him, and which in combat is not less formidable and feared." The long struggle was at last terminated by a blunder on the part of his adversaries, which gave Calvin an instant and overwhelming preponderance. They contracted criminal relations with France and Savoy, and were drawn in 1555 into open revolt against the government of their native city. Their attempt to seize the upper hand by force was easily and promptly suppressed; domiciliary visits laid bare their treason; several, and amongst them members of some of the leading families in Geneva, perished by the hand of the executioner; many others were banished; and Calvin's supremacy and the authority of his institutions continued thenceforward unquestioned and undisturbed.

The current of Calvin's energies, during the ten years which afterwards remained to him on earth, ran principally in the channels of administration at home, hard study and writing given chiefly to his Commentaries, and controversy. "The work of Calvin embraced every thing. The former disciple of Alciatus



was the jurisconsult of Geneva, no less than her divine ; the public archives contain many files of law papers annotated by his hand. In civil cases his sagacity and his legal knowledge are admirable ; in criminal cases, his severity, as was to be expected, is great, but great especially towards those who knew the good and voluntarily chose the evil. He wishes that the human judge, like the Supreme Judge, should require much of him to whom much has been given. Often also the jurisconsult had to merge into the diplomatist. Calvin, whom we have already seen interfering in the critical matter of the pretensions of Berne and of the banished Libertines, was the soul, and sometimes the agent, of all the negotiations in which Geneva had to take part."

"But great affairs were far from being the only ones on which the Reformer was consulted ; details, curious and strange, have been preserved as to the services sometimes required of him. That Robert Stephens, the printer, should have consulted him on printing, and should even have owed to his counsels a part of his reputation, is readily understood ; but if any trade somewhat novel and delicate requested permission to establish itself at Geneva, the council would send the people to speak with M. Calvin to show him their wares, and to work under his eyes, and, according to his opinion, the authorization was granted or refused. One day, a surgeon comes, and the council wishes Calvin to be present at the examination he has to undergo. Another day, it is a dentist, whose art is new, for hitherto men had only been drawers of teeth,



but he announces himself as taking care of and repairing them. He is sent to M. Calvin, and Calvin receives him, puts himself into his skilful hands, and recommends him to the magistrates. It was he who, already in 1544, had endowed Geneva with a trade of which the profits were a great help in hard times; Genevese cloths and velvets had a great sale in France until the reign of Henry IV Sully is much lauded for having established the French manufactures; but Calvin had done no less at Geneva."—Bungener, pp. 329, 330.

It would be tedious to give any detailed narrative of the negotiations which led to the *Consensus Tigurinus*, a concordat effected in 1546 under the ascendancy of Calvin amongst the leading Swiss churches, by which the Calvinistic doctrine respecting the Eucharist was accepted instead of the Zuinglian. Nor can we trace the progress of his controversies with Pighius and Castellio upon Predestination, nor with Westphal and Heshusius respecting Consubstantiation. These disputes were conducted by Calvin with an energy and ability peculiarly his own, and with a vituperative bitterness characteristic both of himself and of the times. Nothing was too vile and too gross to be flung at the heads of those who differed from him; and it mattered nothing what the value of the difference might be. Pighius, one of the most distinguished scholars of the day, who had had the Emperor Charles V for a pupil, died exhausted by hard work in 1542, whilst his wordy strife with Calvin was still pending. Some time after, having to take up again his favourite subject



against a new opponent, Bolsec, Calvin seizes the opportunity to show that the theological animosity was not quenched even by the death of its object. "Pighius died a little after my book was published," he observes in the introduction to his tractate *de Eternâ Predestinatione Dei* bearing date in 1551, "wherefore not to insult a dead dog I applied myself to other lucubrations." Yet he takes up the name of the dead Pighius, thus insultingly, only to offer a greater insult to Bolsec, who is "too insipid an animal" to serve as an opponent at all! Bolsec was originally a monk, but had embraced the Reformed faith, studied medicine, and married and settled at Geneva as a physician. He dared to challenge the dominant predestinarian tenets, and was imprudent enough to do so publicly in the cathedral. After many unseemly altercations he was banished for life, under pain of a whipping should he ever again be found within the city or territory. Towards the Lutherans one might have thought Calvin would have observed some little moderation and decency, especially as regards the doctrine of the Eucharist, on which he like them was at issue with the Zuinglians. But Calvin has no toleration for the least departure from the clear and straight line of his own dogmatism either on the one side or the other. He acknowledged a real, though spiritual, presence of the body and blood of the Saviour to the faithful receiver of the sacrament. For Zuingle, whom he seems to have regarded as a sort of rival, he has hardly ever a good word; and Zuingle's opinion that the Lord's Supper is a mere commemorative rite, he abhors as "profane." West-



phal, on the other hand, held with Luther that the body and blood of Christ are given in and with the sacrament to the faithful; but Calvin has nothing for him and his notions but anger and invective, badly excused by the bitter apology he makes in the preface of one of his contributions to the controversy, that "a bad ass makes a bad driver." The melancholy business of Servetus demands more careful notice, not less from its own importance than from the deep emotions to which it has given rise both at the time and ever since.

Servetus,—whose proper name was Miguel Servede,—was a native of Villanuova, in Spain. He had already crossed Calvin's path, as we have seen; and the years subsequent to 1534 had not passed without communication between them. Servetus was beyond question a clever man, with a mind acute and restless, ever craving after novelty, and blessed with an unwavering confidence in each successive development of its never-ending and incoherent speculations. He had studied law at Toulouse; physic at Paris; and had dabbled in theology at Basle, in Italy, Germany, and wherever else he could find listeners for his eccentric opinions. He rendered one town after another too hot to hold him by his disputatiousness; and at length after various adventures found it necessary to lay aside his own name and to settle down quietly at Vienne as "Dr. Villeneuve." In 1546 he had written his "*Restitutio Christianismi*," and submitted it to Calvin. This work went beyond any thing Servetus had written in its wild and fanatical conceits. Not content with advo-



cating the Millennarian hypothesis, and with maintaining that the earthly reign of Christ was close at hand, Servetus further proclaimed himself to be the Michael of the Revelation who was to compass the overthrow of the Dragon! We can readily imagine the scorn and abhorrence such blasphemous folly would excite in Calvin;—Calvin who himself declined to write a Commentary on the Revelation because he was “altogether unable to comprehend the meaning of the very obscure writer of that book.” Calvin had been in the habit of occasionally exchanging letters with Servetus on theological subjects; but on the receipt of the MS. of the “*Restitutio Christianismi*,” he broke off the correspondence at once with a harsh epistle of reproof, referring Servetus to the “*Institutes*” for any further information he might require on the topics on which they had been in communication. Servetus retorted by forwarding to Calvin a copy of the “*Institutes*,” garnished with a number of manuscript notes containing bitter refutations and criticisms. The hard words of Servetus had evidently sunk deep into Calvin’s memory. About this time he wrote to Farel about him; observing that Servetus had offered to come to Geneva, “if he would allow him.” “But,” Calvin goes on, “I will not give any pledge; for if he do come, and my authority avail any thing, *I will never suffer him to depart alive.*”

“Dr. Villeneuve” could not keep quiet and be contented to practise, even though with much success, as a physician, at Vienne. In an evil hour he got the “*Restitutio*” secretly printed in 1552; and though he



did not circulate it thereabouts, a copy unfortunately reached Geneva, and fell into the hands of Calvin. At Geneva lived one William Trie, an exile from Lyons for the sake of religion. His relations, however, had not yet abandoned all hopes of him, and one of them, named Arneys, carried on an exchange of controversial letters with him, in one of which he pressed Trie with the well-worn argument from the diversities of Protestantism. Trie, who was pretty certainly advised by Calvin, retorted that discipline was strict at Geneva; but that in Papal France, whilst the truth was quenched in blood, the most monstrous heresies were vented with impunity. He instanced the "Restitutio," printed amongst Arney's own neighbours at Vienne, and full of the grossest blasphemies against doctrines held sacred by all Christians, such as the Trinity. Arneys communicated with the ecclesiastical authorities of Vienne, and in the end Servetus was apprehended and handed over to the Inquisition. The only point in this part of the story that we need notice is that the evidence on which Servetus was tried, and eventually convicted, as the author of the book, and condemned to a heretic's death by the Inquisition, was obtained by Arneys from Trie, and by Trie from Calvin. Calvin supplied some printed sheets of the "Restitutio," and a number of letters addressed to him in former times by Servetus. For the time, Servetus avoided his fate by making his escape from prison. What led him to the madness of flying for refuge to Geneva is uncertain. Perhaps he was only passing through on his way elsewhere, though some authorities assert that he remained



undiscovered in the city for a month. He was on the very eve of departure when he was recognized by Calvin amongst his congregation, denounced, and arrested. The after proceedings are sad enough and disgraceful to every one concerned : to Calvin above all. The prosecution was undertaken at first by La Fontaine, formerly a cook, but then a student of theology and acting as secretary to Calvin. Thirty-eight articles of charge were exhibited against Servetus, most of them alleging heresies extracted from the “*de Trinitatis Erroribus*” and the “*Restitutio* ;” but not a few of them of a personal kind, charging Servetus with insulting in his writings and letters various Fathers and Theologians, ancient and modern ; and last, but in such a place by no means least, the thirty-eighth count accused him of defaming and reviling Calvin and the Church of Geneva. When the charges came to be argued, it soon appeared that La Fontaine was no match for the veteran controversialist to whom he was opposed ; and he was accordingly summarily set aside, and Calvin, the real accuser throughout, entered the lists in person against a man who was in truth his own prisoner. Servetus in vain protested that if he had committed any offence at all it was not at Geneva, since the books incriminated had not been printed or circulated there. In vain did he urge his ignorance of the laws of the territory in which he had so unhappily become a sojourner, and ask for an advocate to plead for him and to guide him. In vain did he appeal to the higher and larger councils : in them Calvin’s influence was not so assured, and his appeal was disallowed. The rigour of his imprisonment was



gradually increased, and he was denied towards the last the common necessities of cleanliness and health. Calvin and the pastors not only appeared in open court against him, but stirred up the passions of the people from their pulpits to demand his blood. Servetus himself acted a most unwise part. He was aware that strenuous efforts were being made outside his prison walls to save him, and calculated on the strength of his friends with a hope so sanguine as to make him too often confident and audacious. The Libertines, glad to lay hold of any handle against Calvin, made the cause of Servetus their own, and laboured hard to get it carried before the more popular assemblies where their strength lay. Thus Calvin was driven on in his persecution of Servetus by strong motives of political and religious partisanship, as well as that of private animosity; and he threw into the contest all his vehemence, bitterness, and unswerving determination. He overwhelmed Servetus both in public court and in his prison with invectives and reproaches; which the miserable man, goaded by sufferings and insults, and emboldened by the hope of succour from Calvin's enemies in the State, was not slow to return in kind. To such a pitch of excitement was Servetus worked up, that he tried to change places with his persecutor, and demanded of the council that Calvin should be imprisoned as a heretic, and his goods confiscated. The end of altercations between such men so placed could not be doubtful. Servetus was on Oct. 26, 1553, condemned to be burned as a heretic. Calvin's legislation had left the old code of Geneva unaltered as regards the crime of heresy,



and the very next day was appointed for the execution. It was only on the morning of the 27th, at the time in fact at which he was led out to death, that Servetus, by hearing the formal sentence read at the Town Hall, learned the dreadful fate which was on the instant waiting for him. "He threw himself horror-struck," M. Bungener tells us, "at the feet of the judges, and besought as a favour that he might be beheaded." His supplications were fruitless; and he fell into a sort of stupor broken only by groans and cries for mercy. With a refinement of barbarity, which charity may just allow us to hope was mere thoughtlessness, Farel was the minister selected by Calvin to accompany the doomed man to the stake. Farel's conduct was to the last, as might be expected, harsh, inconsiderate, and un pitying. He upbraided Servetus with his errors, and reproached him for his obstinacy. "His sole task," says M. Bungener, "was to harass Servetus in his last moments in order to extort from him some word which might be considered a disavowal of his errors." When the victim was attached to the stake, on the little hill of Champel, just outside the city, and the fire was lighted, it was found that the executioner had, either from cruelty or ignorance, heaped up nothing but green wood; and the bystanders, shuddering at the piercing shrieks which issued from the smoke, ran and threw on faggots, and so ended the torments of Servetus in about half an hour.

About the whole of this affair the less said by Calvin's admirers the better. From first to last of it the conduct of the great Reformer merits the most utter con-



demnation. Excuses and palliations may indeed be suggested, but any thing in the shape of a defence of him is to a candid mind out of the question. He might, indeed, with good reason have thought himself bound to demonstrate in so conspicuous an instance that the true reformed faith was not less jealous of orthodoxy than the Papacy. The taunt so often since levelled against Protestantism was even then in vogue, that it is in effect identical with atheism, and amounts substantially to a licence to every body to believe and teach what he pleases. Geneva was at the time the capital city, as it were, of the reformed religion of the Continent; and we can readily comprehend the anxiety of him who represented that city in the eyes of Christendom to clear it from all suspicion of unsoundness or indifference as to the fundamental doctrines of the creed. That Servetus was thus unsound is beyond possibility of question. He had been known for years in every theological coterie of Europe as a most daring and foul-mouthed impugner of the doctrine of the Trinity. He had, moreover, rejected infant baptism, a crotchet peculiarly damaging to him at that time, as it tended to identify him with the pestilent sect of the Anabaptists. Some of the doctrinal errors laid to his charge sound strange to us when regarded as items in a capital indictment, as e. g. the allegation that in some notes on Ptolemy's Geography he had questioned the statements of the Pentateuch as to the ancient fertility of the promised land; but statements like this were regarded with pious horror by the contemporaries of Servetus. So far as severity can be



justified by detestableness of opinions in him who was the object of it, Calvin is entitled to the fullest allowance. Neither can we doubt that the adoption of Servetus by the Libertines contributed greatly to enhance the harshness of his treatment, and to ensure his destruction. The cause of Servetus became identified with that of faction and treason in the state, and of subversion and licence in religion and morals. Nor can we doubt that the Libertines thought far less of Servetus, though they espoused his cause, than of the defeat they would inflict on Calvin by delivering Calvin's enemy. But such apologies do but little to dilute the black guilt in which this memorable deed has for ever enshrouded the name and the memory of the great Reformer. The stubborn facts remain that Servetus had crossed Calvin's path in the way of personal opposition twenty years before the trial at Geneva; that Calvin had after an angry correspondence declared that if Servetus came to Geneva he should never leave it alive; that Calvin had done his utmost to slay Servetus by the hand of the Inquisition; that Calvin caused the arrest of Servetus in a city where the unhappy man was only tarrying for a season as a wayfarer and fugitive, and where he had done no wrong; that Calvin himself drew up and personally pressed the indictments; that he used his paramount influence to prevent the removal of the case to a court where the accused would have stood a better chance; that he wrote to Farel whilst the trial was going on to express a hope that "the sentence would be capital;" that he did nothing to soften the rigours of harsh imprisonment; and, lastly, that he aggravated the bitter hour of a most painful death



by forcing on the sufferer, instead of a minister of consolation, the coarsest and most implacable of his foes. It is to the whole circumstances of the case, rather than to the fact that Servetus was burnt for heresy, that we must attribute the general execration with which the deed was heard of throughout Christendom. It seems totally useless to try, as does M. Bungener, to shelter Calvin behind the general opinion and practice of the age. The reformed Swiss churches were asked their advice whilst sentence was not yet passed; and it is a misrepresentation to sum up their judgments as does M. Bungener. "There was a complete and awful unanimity," he tells us,—“Servetus must die!” In truth and in fact not one single church distinctly advised the execution of Servetus. Their letters are worded with caution, and are really nothing more than exhortations to the council of Geneva to be firm and severe with so pestilent a heretic. Bullinger, indeed, advised capital punishment; so did Beza, Calvin's close ally and eventual biographer and successor; so did Farel, reminding Calvin, in a letter which no truly Christian minister ought ever to have written, that Servetus had been “his greatest enemy.” But the general sentiment of the reformed churches was one of utter condemnation of the deed. They thought, as we do, that Servetus was done to death by a man who was his private foe, and that in the most horrible of ways; under pretext, indeed, of religion and justice, but with a premeditation which made these sacred names a mockery, and by a magistracy which was little better than a band of Calvin's creatures. The history of these



times leaves, indeed, little for any party to boast of in the matter of toleration. In the days when Calvin was compassing the death of Servetus at Geneva his own co-religionists were undergoing martyrdom in France; and our own land saw Anabaptists harassed with fire and sword by Edward VI., the adherents of the national church similarly treated by Queen Mary, and not long after the Papists persecuted by Elizabeth. But the plea drawn from the intolerant spirit of the times will not go very far in the particular case before us. Calvin had himself years before eloquently expounded the duties of toleration; and, at the very time when he was hunting Servetus to his doom, he was writing letters full of invective against the cruelties practised on his own friends. And, lastly, we cannot but think that one who had in so many things revolutionized whole systems of theory and practice might, on a point which had clearly been distinctly brought before him, have been expected to be somewhat in advance of his contemporaries. The arrest, the trial, and the execution of Servetus are, therefore, a series of crimes of which the guilt belongs almost undividedly to Calvin, and which form a deep, dark, and ineffaceable blot on his memory.

Calvin's health had been always frail, and his hard labours and many anxieties at Geneva rapidly ruined it. In 1509 he had a violent attack of ague, through which he was but poorly nursed, if nursed at all. The following years witnessed him yet making head against his tasks, though "pains in his head, pains in his legs, pains in his stomach, spitting of blood, difficulty of breathing, the gout, and the stone," gave even more clear



tokens of the approaching end. He continued, however, to preach, but in Feb. 1564, a violent fit of coughing, with the rupture of a blood-vessel, choked his utterance, and put an end for ever to his public ministrations. He lingered on, however, till May, in quiet and calm decay. He received the magistrates who, on his asking an audience, paid a visit to "the humble dwelling of the Rue des Chanoines, in all the pomp of public ceremony;" he saw the pastors, and exhorted them, as he had done the magistrates, in a body; and finally "gave his hand to each one after the other, which was with such anguish and bitterness of heart in every one, that I cannot even recall it to mind," says Beza, "without extreme sadness;" and finally, on the 27th, peacefully expired. His will had been made a few days before; and his whole effects when sold under it brought but 300 crowns. An immense procession of citizens and strangers accompanied him to the cemetery. "The Church wept," as M. Bungener observes, "for her head, and the State for her chief citizen and surest protector under God." "His defects, which had already been effaced by his glory and his services, had completely disappeared in the pure halo with which death encircles the Christian's brow; and willingly would all those multitudes have graven upon a magnificent monument the testimony of their unreserved admiration, their deep gratitude, and their profound veneration. But he had enjoined that every thing should be done 'after the customary fashion,' and that customary fashion, which was observed almost down to the present day, was that no monument should be raised upon any grave, however



illustrious the deceased might be. The earth alone, therefore, covered the remains of Calvin, and he had no other official epitaph, than this half-line inscribed by the side of his name in the Consistorial register : 'Went to God, Saturday the 27th.' Were his bones left longer in peace than those of the vulgar dead? None can say. At all events, for more than two centuries that grave has been dug over again and again, like the rest, by the sexton's spade; and for less than twenty years a small black stone has marked the spot where Calvin perhaps reposed, for it is only a tradition."—Bungener, p. 248.

Calvin's theology and the institutions in which he embodied it are certainly unlovely, and they are in no small degree also narrow, shallow, and hard. But they are throughout pervaded by an intense faith and an unflinching consistency; and they supplied perhaps the only bulwarks able, humanly speaking, to withstand the reflux wave of Romanism which, in Calvin's latter days, came upon the Reformed churches of the Continent. By the middle of the sixteenth century the Reformation had been brought to a stand in Europe, and the adherents of the Papacy were re-uniting their scattered ranks, and preparing for a vigorous and concerted effort to regain their lost ground. The order of the Jesuits had arisen to lead and direct their efforts; an agency of consummate skill and of regulated versatility; and formidable not less from numbers than from its great and rapid extension. The powerful reaction which thus set in carried many churches back; but it was throughout the greater part of Protestant



Europe successfully confronted, and nowhere more successfully than where the Calvinistic system had occupied the ground. That system gathered up into a definite organized shape, the faith, the Church life, and the private practice of Protestantism; and gave unity, definiteness, and point to those aspirations after purer and less artificial modes of religion which Luther and Zuingli had aroused. After Calvin had done his work the Romish theologian had no longer the advantage of contrasting the clear authoritative decrees of his own Church with the dissonant and dubious voices of her multifarious opponents. Then stood forth against Papal infallibility a champion with a summons equally peremptory, and at least equally imposing; and one too whose followers were equally resolute and fanatical. Calvinism manifested the reality of its hold on the nations, by working through their religion upon their politics and their public institutions. Dr. D'Aubigné describes its influence, not without a certain pardonable pride and exaggeration, in his opening pages, as follows:—"The great movements in the way of law and liberty, effected by the people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, have certain relations with the Reformation of Calvin, which it is impossible to ignore. As soon as Guy de Brès and many others returned from Geneva to the Low Countries, the great contest between the rights of the people and the revolutionary and bloody despotism of Philip II. began; heroic struggles took place, and the creation of the United Provinces was their glorious termination. John Knox returned to his native Scotland from Geneva,



where he had spent several years; then popery, arbitrary power, and the immorality of a French court made way in that noble country for that enthusiasm for the gospel, liberty, and holiness, which has never since failed to kindle the ardent souls of its energetic people.

“Numberless friends and disciples of Calvin carried with them every year into France the principles of civil and political liberty, and a fierce struggle began with popery and the despotism, of the Valois first, and afterwards of the Bourbons. And though these princes sought to destroy the liberties for which the Huguenots shed their blood, their imperishable traces still remain among that illustrious nation. The Englishmen who, during the bloody persecution of Mary, had sought an asylum at Geneva imbibed there a love for the gospel and for liberty. When they returned to England, a fountain gushed out beneath their footsteps. The waters confined by Elizabeth to a narrow channel, rose under her successors, and swiftly became an impetuous roaring flood, whose insolent waves swept away the throne itself in their violent course. But restored to their bed by the wise hand of William of Orange, the dashing torrent sank into a smiling stream, bearing prosperity and life afar. Lastly, Calvin was the founder of the greatest of republics. The pilgrims who left their country in the reign of James I., and, landing on the barren shores of New England, founded populous and mighty colonies, are his sons, his direct and legitimate sons; and that American nation, which we have seen growing so rapidly, boasts as its father



the humble reformer on the shores of the Le-man."—D'Aubigné, vol. i. pp. 5—7

Nor must we limit the effects of Calvinism to those lands where it effected an express and recognized lodgment. In our own country it must be credited, as Dr. D'Aubigné hints above, with all that we are wont to associate in literature, tone of thought and feeling, and our daily habits with Puritanism. It would be utterly in vain to deny that the ascendancy of Puritanism in the seventeenth century, short-lived as it was, worked a very marked change in the English nation. The national character was altered thereby in such a way that some of its most striking traits, as they at present suggest themselves to foreigners, were infused into it between the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign and the death of Cromwell. The pilgrims of the Mayflower carried, indeed, with them to the western world the prolific seeds of Presbyterianism, and the kind of aristocratic republicanism which best consorts with Presbyterianism; but enough was left behind in England to leaven our people in perpetuity. It only needs, by way of illustration, to point to the popular notions amongst religious persons in England as to the observance of Sunday. We by no means say that those notions are incorrect or unfounded; but assuredly, whatever be their warrant, they came in with Puritanism. Few who are well acquainted with our poor will deny that in large tracts of country what religion there is amongst them is of a Puritan type. And though, in 1662, the reaction was strong, yet our forms of worship retain, and are likely to retain, several



peculiarities which they owe to the disciples of Calvin. He set the example of choosing for each sermon a well-defined and single text and subject. He almost created the congregational psalm-singing, which is now so much cultivated in England, and has always flourished in more strictly Calvinistic communities. "*Psalm-singer* and *Reformed* were synonymous words in France," M. Bungener tells us. The ejected of 1662 were distinctly Calvinistic in their theology and church system; and it was through them that non-conformity acquired that respectable and recognized standing within the pale of English Christianity, which it has now so long had. In other Christian lands there is scarce any real religion except that which follows the type of the national church. Other modes have either died away or been uprooted by persecution. Amongst ourselves we have a form of doctrine and discipline, which is not only recognized by the State, but exclusively established; and yet side by side with it exist manifold other denominations not less secured by law in liberty of conscience than the Church is in its privileges. Whether this national peculiarity be an opprobrium to our Church, and a calamity to the cause of the Gospel amongst us, or whether it indirectly work good in stimulating our clergy by a wholesome rivalry and competition, may be a question. Certain it is that our modern non-conformists must thank Calvin for imparting that importance and cohesion to their principles which enabled them to win their way, first to toleration, and afterwards to a political power and religious influence so great as once to overthrow, and



more than once to threaten, the very existence of the Church as a national institution.

And yet admitting all this to the full, it is easy to see that M. Bungener, in common with many other continental Protestants, vastly overrates, or rather utterly mistakes, the importance of Calvin as regards the English Reformation. Speaking of the pastor Des Gallars, who was sent on request of Elizabeth's Privy Council to take charge of the French Protestant refugees in London about 1560, M. Bungener says: "Des Gallars remained three years in London; and we see him, on his return, charged to bring back to Calvin and Geneva the most lively testimonies of the gratitude of the English. Thus there was established between England and Geneva that close alliance which was and still is sealed by the great name of the reformer. The mighty monarchy and the little republic were to be sisters before God, sisters even before men, so much does moral grandeur efface, even in the eyes of the world, every inequality; and if one of the two had to give up the name of sister for that of mother, England would give that name to the city of Calvin."—P. 279.

Now it is clear that our English Reformers, Cranmer and his associates, owe nothing whatever to Calvin. Whether we speak of their formularies of doctrine, or of their ritual arrangements, it is demonstrable in either case that they borrowed nothing from Calvinistic sources, that the few new elements they did introduce belong to quite another and an opposite school of Protestantism from that of Geneva, and that they worked altogether on principles essentially different



from those adopted by Calvin. As regards forms of worship, indeed, Calvin was as much an enemy of what is termed "free prayer" as any high churchman; but in drawing up his "Directory" for the use of his congregations in 1545, he chose to become an author rather than a compiler; and regarding the ancient liturgies of his church as utterly and incurably tainted with the corruptions of Romanism, he made a clean sweep of them all, and proceeded to build up a totally different system with new materials. The altars and images at Geneva were of course abolished; but with them went the stone fonts; and the church bells were cast into cannon. Our own Reformers, on the contrary, did not aim at originality in these matters. They altered only where was clear and strong cause for doing so. They merely abridged, corrected, simplified, and re-arranged the ancient and established English offices and ceremonies. The language of the original preface to our Prayer Book, which stands now as part of the introductory matter, and is entitled "Of Ceremonies," is very remarkable. It not only betrays a total unconsciousness of any break of continuity in our devotional usages, such as we are apt to suppose must have occurred at the formal and legal establishment of the Reformation, but distinctly implies the substantial identity of the revised offices with those which were to be now superseded. So far from deferring to Geneva, it was to the reformed Breviary of Cardinal Quignon, published at Rome in 1536, and sanctioned by the Popes in succession until superseded by the Trent Breviary, that Cranmer and his coadjutors went for some of the main improvements



they introduced; and from that Breviary they actually copied, in some passages verbatim, the announcement of their reasons for revision and of the principles observed in conducting it, which this preface contained. The second reformed Prayer Book of 1552 represents indeed a period when the more thorough-going party attained its greatest strength in the Church, and the foreign Protestants had a very considerable influence both at court and with the bishops. Had Edward VI. lived a few years longer, it is possible enough that the English reformation might have been assimilated to the Genevan type. But even the Prayer Book of 1552 is on the whole, like its predecessor, conservative in its tenor. It carries, indeed, further than heretofore the omission of ceremonies and usages which had unhappily been associated with superstition, and it abolished some things which the maturer judgment of the Church in later times has replaced; but the main body of the old worship of the Church was left as it has since remained intact. Even in the Prayer Book of 1552, thus representing the nearest approximation which our Church as a community has ever made towards the principles of Geneva, there are scarce one or two slight and doubtful features of likeness to Calvin's Directory. The penitential introduction (Sentences, Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution) prefixed to our daily offices in 1552, and the use of the Decalogue in the Communion Office which belongs to the same date, have been thought by some to have been suggested by a Latin translation and adaptation of Calvin's Directory, introduced into London in 1551, for the use of the French Protestant



refugees by Valerandus Pollanus, Calvin's successor in the pastorate at Strasburg, but afterwards an exile. That the resemblances pointed out really exist there can be no question : yet they are slight and transient ; and the ritualists have abundantly shown that precedents of vastly greater antiquity and authority than Calvin and Pollanus, may be quoted for the whole of the additions in question. The probability is that the want of some such opening of the services had been felt since 1549 ; that the ancient and primitive usages were known to warrant it ; and that the compiler of the introduction worked with the Directory of Pollanus before him, though how cautiously and independently he used it will be clear to any one who will be at the trouble to compare the one with the other. We might note especially the language of the Confession, where, if the English Reformer had the Directory in his mind at all, it was as a warning rather than an example ; for the language of the Directory implies doctrine about original sin, which our own Church has never sanctioned.

The Articles of Religion are as little Calvinistic as the Prayer Book. It is difficult, indeed, to wrap up more blunders in a few words than may be found in the celebrated saying, " We have a Popish Liturgy, Calvinistic Articles, and an Arminian clergy." The charge, as regards the Articles, is founded on the very great but very common error of styling all kinds of Predestinarians " Calvinists." With as much truth might it be said that Mormonites are Methodists, because neither of them are Romanists. There were many strong Predestinarians before Calvin ; and since



his days there have been many called Calvinists, who would have utterly repudiated more than one cardinal and energetic element of his teaching, and have been entirely disowned by him. Arminius, to take one conspicuous instance, held language on the subject of the Divine decrees which would justify us, in the ordinary loose way of speaking, if we were to characterize him roundly as a Calvinist<sup>1</sup> Yet it is in this, as in other matters, not without reason that Calvinism, the name of the species, has extended itself to the whole genus. In Calvinism we have the most stern, uncompromising, and thorough-going exhibition of Predestinarian opinions. Election is the Alpha from which the whole theology sets out, and the Omega to which it mounts and in which it is closed. Every other tenet, fact, or truth which comes across the theory of Decrees in its logical march is set aside, annihilated, or explained away. Yet Calvinism is but one of many dogmatic systems in which the doctrine of Predestination has played a conspicuous part; and it is one, too, which from its hard and sharp outlines should be least of all confounded with any other. "The Five Points" of Calvinism are the essential cha-

<sup>1</sup> Take, e. g. the following from his fifteenth Public Disputation, "*De Divinâ Prædestinatione*:" "*Prædestinatio est decretum beneplaciti Dei in Christo, quo apud se ab æterno statuit fideles vitâ æternâ donare. Fideles autem dicimus, non qui tales propriis meritis aut viribus erant futuri, sed qui Dei beneficio gratuito et peculiari in Christum erant credituri.*" It is scarce possible to doubt that Arminius, the great adversary of Calvinism in his day, had before him in writing the former of these sentences, Section 2 of the Disputation, our own seventeenth Article, which is often thought so decidedly Calvinistic.



racteristics, which he who holds in their entirety, and he only, is a Calvinist, and he who rejects in any part or degree is none. These points are, (1) Predestination, of some individuals to life, of the others to damnation; (2) Particular Redemption, i.e. that the Saviour died for the elect only; (3) Original Sin; (4) Irresistible Grace; (5) Final Perseverance. There are few candid persons who will deny that the tenth of our original forty-two Articles was utterly contrariant to the fourth of these points, or that the present sixteenth Article is against the fifth of them, or that the second and thirty-first Articles are not fairly irreconcilable with the second of them. The language of the ninth of our Articles, too, about original sin, comes short by a vast interval of that of the Calvinistic confessions<sup>2</sup>; and in no part of our authorized Church documents is there a word to be found which can be wrested into approval of the terrible tenet of Reprobation. The seventeenth of our Articles, which seems superficially so Calvinistic, is not in reality so at all. It was not borrowed from Calvinistic sources; and, indeed, it seems to have been an original composition. When analyzed it will be found to consist

<sup>2</sup> Compare the language of our ninth Article with that, e.g. of the Westminster Confession. This, in its sixth Article, declares man by his fall as "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body;" and as "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." In similar terms the *Confessio Helvetica*, Art. VIII., describes our "*nativa corruptio, quâ concupiscentiis pravis immersi, et a bono aversi, ad omne malum propensi, pleni omni nequitia, diffidentia, contemptu et odio Dei, nihil boni ex nobis ipsis facere, immo ne cogitare quidem possumus.*"



of little more than a series of texts, the upshot of which is to show us that when living in obedience to the laws of God, we may humbly trust that God hath chosen us unto life ; to discourage the entertainment of any other thoughts or hopes on the subject than such as these ; and to exhort all to take the promises of God in the broad form in which they are made, and to act upon His commands without cavil. The anxiety of the framers of the Article was certainly not to lay down clear definitions on those subjects which Calvin regarded as fundamental to faith and piety, but to guard against fatalist perversions and abuses. The seventeenth Article is scarcely even Augustinian in its tenor, much less Calvinistic ; and between Augustine and Calvin there is a gulf fixed which might seem to some not wide, but which in truth places them in two totally different regions of theology and church life.

Augustine had in his days to deal with a new and dangerous tendency to overrate the power of unassisted human nature for good, and to ascribe an intrinsic and proper merit to man's works. To assert, as Pelagius and his followers did, that we may obtain salvation at our pleasure if we will, was obviously to render the Gospel superfluous. The heresy may perhaps have arisen in an honest desire to quicken men, amidst the decay of primitive love and zeal which the fifth century saw, to holier and stricter lives, and to more self-denying endeavour ; but its deadly character is none the less certain because its inventor meant well. Augustine opposed it with the determination and energy which the crisis required ; and, to shut out its pervers-



sions, insisted far more emphatically than any preceding doctor of the church had done on the naturally fallen and helpless state of man, on our need of Divine help from first to last in the work of salvation, and on the sovereign power of grace in that work. Viewing his writings from the stand-point we occupy since the Calvinistic controversies, we may perhaps without presumption think that this great father might well have spoken with more of caution and qualification on these high themes. But his purpose was to enforce and to extol the necessity and the supremacy of that grace which others had unscripturally undervalued and dispensed with. His purpose was to vindicate for God, the rightful owner, those impulses for good, and that steady perseverance in well-doing, which had been arrogantly claimed as belonging to self-sufficing man. He never cries up the naked Divine decrees against God's own appointed instruments and channels of grace; and it is here that his Predestinarianism parts so unequivocally from that of Calvin. When once it is held as a primary axiom that a sentence is passed as regards each and every man before his birth, whereby he is inevitably fated either to salvation or to perdition, the means of grace fall at once into the background, and with them the whole machinery by which men are brought into the fold of the church, and nourished when there. Augustine unquestionably taught that baptism duly ministered conferred a mighty spiritual gift on each and every receiver who did not oppose a bar. Calvin could not consistently teach so; for grace, if given at all, was in his view, and in his view first of all Chris-



tian doctors, irresistible and irrevocable. To teach, e. g. broadly, then, that baptism carried with it any real blessing would have been tantamount, on his principle, to asserting that every baptized person must be saved. It is not a little remarkable that Calvin's doctrine about baptism furnishes the only conspicuous example of inconsistency and prevarication to be found throughout his opinions. He was far from intending utterly to reject primitive authority ; he had the dislike of a rival for the Zuinglian doctrine of the sacraments ; yet if a man's salvation must be absolutely and simply dependent on a secret and eternal decree of God, much more must the efficacy of the means of grace be so ; and the outward sign could have no proper and intrinsic connexion with the inward benefit. Calvin's followers, then, were but following the lead of Calvin's own irresistible logic when they went one step further in these matters than he, and held simply that the sacraments are signs of grace already given, and positive ordinances which the faithful will observe out of love and obedience, rather than as moral necessities of salvation. Thus did Calvinism prey upon and eat away the sacramental system of the church ; and it was only acting with an instinct thoroughly of a piece with its theory when it broke short off the line of succession from the Christian generations before it, and inaugurated for itself *de novo* a doctrine, a discipline, and a regimen peculiar to itself.

It is needless to say that during the Reformation period there was no father so constantly in men's mouths as Augustine. The corruptions of the later



mediæval church, formulated and systematized by the Schoolmen, had in fact resulted in practical evils substantially identical with those against which Augustine was driven to contend. The teaching to which the people were accustomed, however explained by the theologians, had resulted in something which was essentially indistinguishable from Pelagianism. Men were in effect exhorted to win heaven by their works. Against such errors the writings of Augustine furnished a perfect magazine of arguments, and his name and authority in the Church were second to none. Hence the constant appeals to him by the Protestant controversialists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; hence the reintroduction of the old troubles about Predestination and Election; and hence, as it seems to us, the necessity for framing an article amongst the doctrinal definitions of the Church of England on this perplexing subject. It was, we can hardly doubt, to guard against extremes and abuses into which those who had as it were sat at the feet of Augustine might easily fall, that our seventeenth Article was designed.

It is in truth little less than chronologically impossible to maintain that our Reformers, in the Articles of 1552, intended to settle the Calvinistic doctrine of Election, or any thing about it. For, in truth, the principal and pertinent elements of that doctrine had not come into notice when those Articles were drawn up. There is historical evidence to show that our Articles were designed, compiled, and communicated by Archbishop Cranmer to the bishops, in the course of 1551, though several months passed before they were



finally ratified and published. Now the work of Calvin, *De æternâ Dei Prædestinatione*, bears date according to its dedication January 1, 1552. This work was the result of his controversy with Bolsec on the subject of Predestination, and of the agitation and discussion of that doctrine which had arisen in 1551 amongst the Swiss churches. It is quite true that some years previously, viz. in 1543, Calvin had dealt with the subject of Grace and Free Will in his answer to Pighius; neither can we concur with those who regard his doctrine of Predestination as a discovery of his later years. But it is equally true, on the other hand, that up to 1552, without shunning a topic to which no little space is allotted in Scripture, he had handled it with most wise caution, prudence, and reserve; and had by no means, as he subsequently did, developed it methodically, or laid it down as above all things to be inculcated and applied by the preacher. The work against Pighius was not a complete tractate on its subject; and the earlier editions of the Institutes by no means assign that leading place to Predestination and Election, which most readers might expect. With Calvin, as with others, controversy first drew out into clear conception and emphatic expression the disputed tenets; and it was only too characteristic of the man to assert, with ever-increasing positiveness and severity, positions which though not new to him he found to be perpetually challenged by others. Whilst our Articles were under consideration, the Reformed churches were as yet at one on every leading principle, if we except the sacraments only. The doctrine of the



divine decrees was only just beginning to cause a stir in Switzerland; and the agitation did not reach our own land until the reign of Queen Mary was over. It is a very striking fact, to which attention has been drawn by Archbishop Laurence (Bampton Lectures, pp. 44, 45), that whilst the copious work of Foxe, the Acts and Monuments, goes with no little detail into the opinions of the several martyrs during the Marian persecution, and into the controversies in which they were engaged, Predestination does not appear in it as a moot question, nor is Calvin so much as alluded to throughout. Those who suffered were charged sometimes with the heresies of Luther, sometimes with those of Zuingle, but not with the peculiar dogmas of Geneva. In truth, the influence and reputation of Calvin, and the heats and debates to which his Predestinarian views gave rise, belong, so far as England is concerned, to a stage of our Church history clearly subsequent to that under consideration, and broadly distinguished from it. Cranmer and his coadjutors aimed at defining in our national confession of faith the position of the Church of England as regards the adversaries who then stood forth against her, the Romanists, on the one hand, and the Sectaries, principally the Anabaptists, on the other. They neither did, nor, unless they had had the gift of prophecy, could intend to determine either on the one side or the other the Quinquarticular controversy.

Far different was the state of things after the reformed faith had been reinstated by Queen Elizabeth. The exiles of Mary's reign came home again with the



accession of her sister in great numbers. They had been hospitably sheltered in the day of their trouble by their continental brethren, amongst whom those of the Swiss churches had honourably distinguished themselves by their kind offices. They returned fascinated, as might be expected, by the imposing system of doctrine which Calvin had by this time developed to its full proportions, and had pushed to ascendancy amongst the Swiss and neighbouring Protestant churches; and they were not less enamoured of the "godly discipline" and institutions in which that doctrine was embodied and applied. The necessary ejection of reactionary bishops and incumbents obliged our rulers to fill many sees and parishes from the band of the returned exiles; and Calvinism thus gained, for the first time, a broad and firm footing amongst our authorized teachers, and in the religious thought of the nation. A great change, as regards the general estimation of Calvin in England, quickly took place. In King Edward's time we find him tendering advice to the Protector Somerset, and to Cranmer; and evidently anxious to influence, if not to guide, the course of the Reformation, then actively proceeding in our Church. His overtures however were completely neglected; and our Reformers turned for such advice and help as they needed to Melancthon and the Lutherans. But in Queen Elizabeth's time the powerful Calvinistic element introduced after 1558 began to work. "The Institutes" became ere long a popular, and at length a standard treatise, and were commonly used as a textbook for divinity students at the universities and by



bishops' chaplains. "Of what account the Master of the Sentences was in the Church of Rome, the same and more amongst the preachers of reformed churches Calvin had purchased; so that the perfectest divines were judged they which were skilfullest in Calvin's writings. His books almost the very canon to judge both doctrine and discipline by."—Hooker, Preface, ii. 8. "What should the world doe with the old musty doctors? Alleage Scripture, and shew it alleaged in the sense that Calvin alloweth, and it is of more force in any man's defense, and to the prooffe of any assertion, than if ten thousand Augustines, Jeromes, Chrysostomes, Cyprians, or whosoever els were brought foorth. Doe we not daily see that men are accused of heresie for holding that which the fathers held, and that they never are cleere, if they find not somewhat in Calvin to justify themselves?"—MS. note of Hooker, in the title-page of "A Christian Letter," &c. quoted in Keble's note as above.

Yet even in 1563 and 1571, when Calvinism was popular and powerful amongst us, and the Articles of Religion were thoroughly and carefully revised, no infusion of Genevan doctrine into them took place. One or two omissions were made by way of conciliation to the more ardent Reformers, and one or two others to the more moderate Romanists; but the wary pilots, who then guided the ecclesiastical fortunes of England, kept as clear as ever of Swiss precedents. In truth, Archbishop Matthew Parker, and those on whom he principally relied, were not of the band of the Marian exiles. They were far more observant of the policy



of Cranmer and of Ridley, and far more watchful of the principles of primitive antiquity, than desirous to remodel their doctrine upon a Predestinarian basis, or to build up a discipline after the pattern urged on them by Calvinistic zealots. In fact they toned down in one or two slight, but significant points, the language of the seventeenth Article<sup>3</sup>; and for what they required in the way of new matter, resorted to the Lutheran confession of Wirtemberg as their predecessors had to that of Augsburg.

Towards the close of Elizabeth's reign, the Predestinarian party within our Church attained its greatest influence. The two Archbishops were decidedly friendly to it; and no little disfavour and even persecution befell those who ventured to question the received dogmatism. The Articles of Religion were naturally found to be obscure and defective; and to speak on some points "very dangerously." The Lambeth Articles of 1595, the "Nine Assertions Orthodoxal," were beyond doubt intended as an addition to our formularies, such as should give unchallenged and perpetual possession of the Church to the then popular school. This attempt failed; the Puritans, disappointed in their hopes of revolutionizing the national Church after their pattern, gradually but decidedly seceded from her; and taking

<sup>3</sup> The words "in Christ" were added to the expression, "those whom He hath chosen out of mankind," in order apparently to avoid lending any appearance of sanction to the dogma of arbitrary decrees. In the last paragraph a no less remarkable omission was made. Originally that paragraph began thus: "Furthermore, *although the decrees of predestination are unknown to us, yet we must receive,*" &c. The words in italics were left out in 1563.



up a position of antagonism, delivered her for ever from any fears that Calvinism would gain the upper hand within her pale; but did so at the cost of a terrible conflict, wherein both altar and throne fell for a time before the stern and gloomy but energetic and organized fanaticism which Calvinism seems above all other schemes of faith to inspire.

Our Church then has given no formal sanction, nor any thing approaching to it, to the "Five Points." The utmost that can be claimed is, that her doctrinal formularies are framed in such a spirit of moderation, as to permit beneath their broad statements the holding of Calvinism as not unlawful and prohibited. Yet if the Articles are patient of a Calvinistic interpretation, they are certainly not more than patient of it; they assuredly do not solicit it. Not only their remarkable omission of cardinal points in the Predestinarian scheme, but the general tenor of their teaching upon Baptism, upon the Atonement, and upon Original Sin, are averse from such construction. In this point of view a Calvinistic theologian must ever regard the Articles as unsatisfactory, halting, and even inconsistent. The same reproaches must be borne by Augustine and all his followers up to Calvin. Can any thing, if we look at it as mere matter of argument, be more illogical than to lead off in theologizing with emphatic declarations about the sovereignty of grace, and the feebleness of the human will; and then to allow that of those born again by the gift of grace, very many are lost after all, and that because their will did not co-operate? Yet something of this sort Augustine and his more Catholic followers



have maintained. It is only removing the difficulty one step further back, leaving it utterly unsolved, to invent an election within the elect; and to suggest, as in some of his later works Augustine seems to do, that of those called to grace many do not attain to life because there has not been vouchsafed to them the further and higher vocation to glory. If we start with the principle that grace is supreme and solitary in the work of salvation, we are argumentatively shut up to the conclusion that grace is, if given at all, irrevocable and irresistible. Grace is given only by the will of God: "and who hath resisted His will?"

Such reasoning has always seemed to a certain class of minds unanswerable; and we have no mind to quarrel with that verdict. But it only seems to us to demonstrate on the one hand that that same reasoning is misapplied in these high and mysterious subjects; and on the other that Calvinism is a system which is essentially rationalistic in character. It is quite possible in divine philosophy to start with most indubitable principles, to draw inferences from them in which no logical flaw can be found, and yet to be landed after all in consequences which are clearly erroneous and repugnant to Scripture. The Church universal, indeed, has a promise from her Head and founder, that she shall be guided in such questions of doctrine as in the course of her warfare she may have to entertain and to resolve. But the individual theologian can claim no such guarantee; and when he takes in hand to systematize and to construct dogma, he is liable to all those shortcomings and miscarriages which affect man's under-



standing in any other employment of it. Those who know most of the ways of God are, like children on the brink of the ocean, ignorant of infinitely more than they see. It is few minds that can master and survey at once even the several tracts of divine truth which are revealed; and there are almost if not altogether none who can adjust the manifold parts of it in their due relations and proportions. A theologian, therefore, is always and necessarily wrong if he insists on imposing as God's truth a scheme of belief which, however logical and scientific, is in all its details and applications of human authorship.

The cardinal vice of the Calvinistic theology has been often pointed out. It lays hold of the grand truths connected with God's sovereignty and man's impotence for good; and constructs a system thereon as if these were the only principles relevant to faith and piety, or at least as if none other could rank with them in dignity and practical value. Reasoning from these truths, the Calvinist stretches his daring deductions far beyond the proper province of the human understanding, and far beyond the limits of Revelation; and undertakes to lay down for us what have been and are from and to all eternity the counsels as regards our salvation of Him whose outgoings are from everlasting, and "His judgments like the great deep." "Thus and thus must God have decreed; thus and thus and on these grounds will He adjudge at the end of all things." The several members of the argument move on like the files of a well-appointed army, serried and irresistible; what seems available is assimilated at once and falls into place;



what withstands is thrust aside or swept away. In the end we are brought to a religious fatalism, which can hardly, by a happy inconsistency, of which we gladly allow that Calvinists are constantly guilty, be other than destructive of all those beliefs and motives whereby our hands are quickened to good and our lives preserved from apathy and despair.

There is a certain sort of men, narrow in mind but keen and active, with little genius but a fair share of ratiocinative faculties, with a hold on what they do know all the faster because they know only half the truth, who will always tend towards Calvinism. For similar reasons this scheme of religion has an attraction for very many of us towards the decline of life. Imagination has then ceased to disport itself with the freshness and exuberance which it had in early years; the passions have grown cooler; the intellect takes the lead, and finds congenial exercise in the elaborate and rigorous reasonings which characterize Calvinistic theology; then the world, too, has proved both puzzling and disappointing; endeavours after self-discipline and improvement of others have seemed to bear but scanty fruit; and the religious Stoicism of Geneva presents itself as supplying at once a theory of God's dealings which experience has shown much to recommend as probable, and which braces the mind for that which yet remains to be endured. Calvinism will thus always hold its ground amidst the many and various aspects of religious thought and faith, for it suits well a certain and not a small class of minds; and it has, moreover, a manifest affinity and seasonableness for a mood and



temperament by no means uncommon after the best of our days in this world are past and gone.

Such reflections explain and justify the allegation that Calvinism is essentially rationalistic. For rationalism is not a title which belongs properly and peculiarly to any particular set of religious opinions, or opinions about religion, but rather to a certain method of arriving at conclusions in the province of religion, be those conclusions what they may. The rationalist is one who holds what he holds not as matter of faith, but as the result of argument which has convinced his understanding. The non-rationalist need not hold that which his reason gainsays; on the contrary, he ought to be able to give a good account in reason of the hope that is in him; but the principle on which he first believed was not argument but testimony, not demonstration but authority, not reason but faith. The Calvinistic system ever makes its appeal to the reason; and, viewed thus, is far more thoroughly, far more purely rationalistic than any system of religious tenets the world ever saw, except perhaps its own proper and usual corruption, Socinianism. Calvin lays out the scheme of salvation for you in clear sharp lines, and in logical sequence. His word to you is, "Accept the covenant, appropriate it, and live." The business of the minister is simply to declare and explain the terms of the bargain God has been pleased to make, in order to rescue some few from their otherwise inevitable doom. The destruction of the very idea of common worship, and the dislike of any thing and every thing in the shape of symbolical and ornate ritual, follow of course.



Where religion is made a simple affair of the understanding, preaching, i. e. enlightening and informing men's minds as to the method of salvation, is the one thing needful. The communities which have held stedfastly to Calvin's theology have, therefore, been more consistent than himself when they have reverted, as they have done, to the Zuinglian doctrine of the sacraments, which Calvin worked so hard to uproot; and when they have even abandoned the "Directory," wherein some few shreds of liturgical notions yet lingered, and by limiting their ministers to extemporaneous effusions, have turned their very prayers into a sermon.

The understanding when elevated into a destructive pre-eminence over the other faculties, as it is in the Calvinistic system, is not likely to be satisfied for long with the function of drawing conclusions from assigned premises. It will go on to scrutinize principles too; to ask on what grounds they rest, why those particular ones are entitled to exclusive authority. It was not for nothing that Lælius Socinus lived and thought for several years at Zurich, before he migrated to Poland in 1551, and began to propagate his heresy. It is not an accident that the Calvinistic churches generally, with the exception indeed of the Scotch Establishment, have lapsed utterly and hopelessly into Socinianism. Particular parts of the Genevan dogmas, no doubt, may bear a share in the blame of provoking a reaction against their harshness. Their one-sided presentment of Christ's work for us as almost solely one of vicarious satisfaction, and their exaggeration of the truth



as regards the fall of man, transgress or overpass so grievously both experience and reason, both Scripture and primitive teaching, that when propounded they can hardly escape being contradicted, and they can hardly be contradicted without inducing error in the opposite extreme. Yet it is, perhaps, rather in its naked intellectualism that we must seek the true ground of the powerful affinity which Calvinism undoubtedly possesses for Socinianism, and through this for unbelief.

Calvin's own town furnishes the most striking and the most melancholy example of these last remarks. Geneva, which inflicted a slow and torturing death on Servetus for rationalism, has in our days expressly and officially repudiated all confessions of faith whatsoever. Where in old times it was penal to be absent from sermon, travellers now report but a few scores as surrounding on a Sunday the pulpit whence Calvin preached. Whilst we write, the news has arrived that the Consistory,—Calvin's Consistory!—has recently rejected a proposal made by some of the pastors to celebrate its founder's tercentenary. Romanism at present seems to be at Geneva the rising faith, and to offer the only hope and prospect of winning back to something like a visible profession of Christianity one of the most irreligious, though by no means the most immoral, cities of the Continent.

THE END.



